



VLADA REPUBLIKE HRVATSKE

REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
ACTION PLAN FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE IN
THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA FOR THE PERIOD
2012–2013

Zagreb, September 2013

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I. Introduction

The Open Government Partnership is a multilateral initiative aimed at ensuring concrete advancement in the area of transparency and openness of public authority bodies, the inclusion and empowering of citizens and the civil society, combating corruption, and the use of new technologies to improve the quality of services provided to citizens by public administration.

As a member of the global initiative Open Government Partnership, the Republic of Croatia has declared its readiness to support the principles of transparency, the fight against corruption, the empowering of citizens and the advantages that lie in the use of new technologies, in order to improve the efficiency and responsibility of public authority bodies at all levels and to create the prerequisites for more efficient and innovative public service provision and public resource management.

The values upon which the efforts of member countries of the Open Government Partnership rest are entirely complementary to the values that Croatia has committed to during its process of accession to the European Union and the many years of hard work towards fulfilling the requirements for reforms and alignment in all areas of social, political and economic activity.

By joining the new global initiative Open Government Partnership in September 2011, the Republic of Croatia assumed the obligation to draft a national action plan and present it to other states, members of the initiative, at the annual meeting in April 2012. Under the Action Plan, adopted by the Government of the Republic of Croatia on 5 April 2012, the proposed measures and implementing activities have been divided into four chapters: i) fiscal transparency; ii) access to information; iii) use of information technology; and iv) citizen and civil society participation.

As evident from the key areas selected under this Action Plan, this plan reflects the commitment of the Republic of Croatia to fulfilling the four basic principles of the Open Government Partnership initiative, namely transparency, citizen participation, responsibility, and technology and innovation. This commitment has further been confirmed by the selection of measures and implementing activities to which the Republic of Croatia has committed under the Action Plan. With the selected 9 measures and 33 implementing activities, the Government of the Republic of Croatia has undertaken to improve the content and transparency of budget documents and improve their accessibility and comprehensibility for citizens by setting up a system of participation in the drafting and monitoring of state and local government budgets; improving the transparency of companies of special state interest, improving the legislative framework that regulates the exercise of the right to access to information, improving the availability of data on public spending and the contents of relevant registers, ensuring transparency of the work of public authority bodies so that the rights of citizens may be fulfilled, and improving consultation practices with the interested public in the adoption of new laws, other regulations and acts.

The selected measures and activities also address the common challenges of the Open Government Partnership initiative, in particular the promotion of public services and more efficient public resource management, primarily through the establishment of a central government web portal (*gov.hr*) which will bring together information and content from all the websites of state administration bodies and will ensure the secure and confidential access to citizens' personal data and electronic services in various public administration information systems.

This report gives an overview of the implementation of the Open Government Partnership initiative in a little over one year since the start of its implementation. As the Government of the Republic of Croatia formally began implementing the initiative in April 2012, in line with the plan of activities of the Open Government Partnership initiative, the first year of implementation started on 1 July 2012 and ended on 30 June 2013, with the Republic of Croatia being obligated to publish the report on the implementation of the initiative in the first year of implementation by 30 September 2013. However, the Government of the Republic of Croatia had already launched several of the activities in April 2012 and the report also includes data on certain activities that took place after June 2013. As the Action Plan covers the period of the whole of 2013, the deadlines for some of the activities envisaged by the Action Plan fall after the current reporting deadline, and therefore, the implementation of these activities will be covered by the report for the next reporting period of the implementing initiative.

II. Short overview of the drafting process of the Action Plan

Towards the end of August 2011, the Republic of Croatia submitted an official letter of intent for participation in the Open Government Partnership, thereby undertaking to draft a national action plan and present it to other countries, members of the initiative at the annual meeting in April 2012.

The process of drafting the proposal of the Action Plan for the implementation of the initiative in the Republic of Croatia included participation of the general interested public through organised public discussions and Internet consultations.

The first public discussion was held on 14 September 2011, organised by the Office of the President of the Republic of Croatia, the Office for Cooperation with NGOs of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, and the Embassy of the United States to Croatia, and gathered 180 participants (representatives of government bodies, civil society organisations, the academic community, media and the diplomatic corps).

Public consultation on priority issues of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Open Government Partnership initiative in the Republic of Croatia was held on 31 January 2012, organised by the Office for Cooperation with NGOs of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and the Embassy of the United States to Croatia, with the support from the European Union IPA 2009 programme. This was attended by 100 participants (representatives of government bodies, civil society organisations, the academic community, media and the diplomatic corps).

The closing public consultation was held on 26 March, organised by the Office for Cooperation with NGOs of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, and gathered 40 participants (representatives of government bodies, civil society organisations and the academic community).

Internet consultation on priority issues to be covered by the Action Plan took place from 27 January to 13 February 2012.

All comments and suggestions received during consultations with the interested public were taken into account in the final definition of the Action Plan content.

To ensure continuous dialogue between competent government bodies, units of local and regional self-government, civil society organisations and the academic community on all aspects of Action Plan preparation and implementation, and in general to boost openness and transparency of public authority bodies, the Government of the Republic of Croatia issued a decision on 26 January 2012, setting up the Council for the Open Government Partnership Initiative of the Government of the Republic of Croatia. The Council has 19 members (representatives of government, local and regional authorities, civil society organisations, the academic community and the media) and each member has a deputy. The tasks of the Council are to prepare a Proposal of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Open Government Partnership Initiative in the Republic of Croatia, to implement the consultation procedure on the Proposal of the Action Plan, to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan, and to propose amendments to the Action Plan to the Government of the Republic of Croatia. Public authority bodies and bodies responsible for the implementation of the measures of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Open Government Partnership Initiative in the Republic of Croatia for period 2012–2013 are obligated to provide detailed information on the implementation of the measures that fall within their jurisdiction to the Council, which are then analysed at Council sessions. Until end-July 2013, the Council held seven sessions. In addition, Council members regularly receive information on the implementation of the Action Plan and on general issues related to the implementation of the initiative by means of a special mailing list.

It should be stressed that civil society organisations have the right to fully participate in all phases of development and monitoring of the document's implementation. This approach is in line with the objectives of the Government to create room for joint action in the creation, implementation and monitoring of policies of direct interest to the citizens through a new concept of togetherness between government authorities, citizens and civil society, thereby improving transparency and openness of the work of public authority bodies and including citizens and the civil society in public policy creation.

The Action Plan for the Implementation of the Open Government Partnership Initiative in the Republic of Croatia for period 2012–2013, adopted by the Government of the Republic of Croatia at its session on 5 April 2012, was drafted on the basis of public consultations, Council session discussions and opinions provided by state administration bodies determined as competent and co-competent bodies. The Action Plan was then presented at the annual conference of the Open Government Partnership on 17–18 April 2012 in Brazil.

As shown above, it is evident that the Government of the Republic of Croatia has consulted the general public in the drafting process of the Action Plan, employing different mechanisms such as open discussions and online consultations. By setting up the Council for the Open Government Partnership Initiative, it has also provided a new, specific forum for regular consultations of stakeholders in different sectors on the success of Action Plan implementation. Information on the Open Government Partnership initiative is regularly published on the website of the Office for Cooperation with NGOs, where a special web page has been created for this purpose, while Council sessions are also announced on the website of the Government of the Republic of Croatia.

Further evidence of commitment to this objective can be found in the organisation of the Second OGP European Outreach and Support Meeting held on 4–5 October 2012 in Dubrovnik, organised by the Government of the Republic of Croatia and Croatian civil society organisations, in cooperation with the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as co-chair of the Open Government Partnership, and with the financial support of Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations (TACSO). The objective of this meeting was to gather representatives of governments and civil society organisations from Europe to discuss the progress achieved in the implementation of the national action plans for the implementation of the Open Government Partnership initiative through an exchange of experiences. The Meeting was attended by 125 participants from 37 countries.

Yet another proof of Croatia's commitment to the Open Government Partnership initiative lies in the fact that the President of the Republic of Croatia, in his speech before the General Assembly of the United Nations in late September 2012, called for greater responsibility, better management and closer cooperation between countries, the civil society and the private sector, stressing that the Croatian Government has made significant headway in making its work more transparent and accessible to its citizens, and that as a member of the Open Government Partnership initiative, it has taken an active role in the areas of fiscal transparency, access to information, information technology and participation of the civil society.

III. Implementation of the Action Plan

According to the reports received from the competent bodies, the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Open Government Partnership Initiative in the Republic of Croatia for the period 2012–2013 has largely been implemented successfully and according to plan.

Of the total of 33 implementing activities, 11 were fully implemented, 19 are currently under implementation and 3 activities were partly implemented (activities 1.1; 1.3 and 1.4). The activities currently under implementation are those activities whose implementation is continuous and those for which the implementation deadline has not expired yet. The only exception is activity 9.2, which envisages the establishment of a standardised Internet system for public consultation in the implementation of new laws, other regulations and acts. This activity was envisaged for completion by December 2012 but, as it was decided that this system was to be a part of a large project to develop a new standardised web portal of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, which is

currently underway, this deadline has not been met. In the interim period, the information on open consultations can be obtained from website supported by the website of the Office for Cooperation with NGOs of the Government of the Republic of Croatia.

The activities currently under implementation, or those only partly implemented so far, are either those activities that require continuous implementation or those which relate to the further development of the *Moja Uprava (My Administration)* web portal, i.e. the development of a standardised internet system for consultations with the interested public. As the Government has reached a decision to set up a standardised Internet portal, under the working name *gov.hr*, which should also incorporate these two systems, some of the deadlines set under the Action Plan have not been met, though the activities on the *gov.hr* project are moving forward strongly. Until the new web portal is fully operational, the Moja Uprava portal will operate in its original form, while for the past year and a half, the Office for Cooperation with NGOs of the Government has provided an updated subpage on consultations on draft laws, other regulations and acts with the interested public. This, in addition to Government social network profiles, serves as a central point where information on open consultations can be found.

1. Fiscal transparency

In the area of fiscal transparency, four measures and eight implementing activities have been envisaged under the Action Plan.

MEASURE 1. IMPROVING THE CONTENT AND TRANSPARENCY OF BUDGETARY DOCUMENTS

Implementing activity 1.1

Publish the proposal of the state budget timely and update it so that it contains the following:

a) Information which shows how proposals of new statutory solutions will influence the revenue and expenditure of the budgetary year in comparison with the existing legislation; b) Functional classification of expenditures for the budgetary year and the year preceding it; c) The state of public debt at the beginning and end of the budgetary year; d) Structure of public debt for the budgetary year and the year preceding it; e) Arrears with current state on 30 June; f) Information on contingent liabilities for the budgetary year (guarantees); g) Information about where it is possible to find the data on the impact of macroeconomic presumptions on budget revenue, expenditure and debt (sensitivity analysis).

Implementing Body: Ministry of Finance

Implementation Deadline: November 2012 and November 2013

The activity has partly been implemented on time, but due to its extreme complexity has not been fully implemented.

Some of the obligations are not the sole responsibility of the Ministry of Finance and require significant changes in the preparation of the draft state budget, which are not currently possible due to the lack of administrative staff required to deal with the large number and the demanding nature of activities and determined priorities. Given the existing staff, it is not possible at this point to make a significant step forward in comparison with the current practice.

The intention is to incorporate all information related to activities referred to under item 1.1 in the Proposal of the State Budget of the Republic of Croatia for 2014 and projections for 2015 and 2016. **The activity will be fully implemented** with the drafting of the Proposal of the State Budget for 2014 and Projections for 2015 and 2016, to be submitted by the Government of the Republic of Croatia to the Croatian Parliament within the legally determined time limits.

a) Information which shows how proposals of new statutory solutions will influence the revenue and expenditure of the budgetary year, in comparison with the existing legislation.

The Ministry of Finance has reported that the State Budget of the Republic of Croatia for 2013 and the projections for 2014 and 2015 contains information that shows how statutory solutions in the area of taxation will influence the revenue and expenditure of the budgetary year, which can be seen in the Explanation of the State Budget and Financial Plans of Extrabudgetary Users for 2013 and Projections for 2014 and 2015.

b) Functional classification of expenditure for the budgetary year and the year preceding it

The functional classification of expenditure for the budgetary year has not been published in the context of the State Budget of the Republic of Croatia for 2013 and Projections for 2014 and 2015, but has been published on the website of the Ministry of Finance (<http://www.mfin.hr/hr/drzavni-proracun-2013-godina>). This activity will be fully implemented with the drafting of the Proposal of the State Budget of the Republic of Croatia for 2014 and projections for 2015 and 2016, to be submitted by the Government of the Republic of Croatia to the Croatian Parliament within the legally determined time limits.

c) The state of public debt at the beginning and end of the budgetary year

The state of public debt at the beginning and end of the budgetary year is not published in the proposal of the State Budget. The Ordinance on the semi-annual and annual report on the execution of the State Budget, applied for the first time in the Annual Report on the Execution of the State Budget for 2012, envisages publication of the state of the public debt at the beginning and end of the budgetary year. The state of public debt at the beginning and end of the budgetary year is published in the Annual Report on the Execution of the State Budget for 2012.

d) Structure of public debt for the budgetary year and the year preceding it

The structure of public debt for the budgetary year and the year preceding it is not published in the proposal of the State Budget. The structure of public debt is published in the Annual Report on the Execution of the State Budget for 2012.

e) Arrears with current state on 30 June

Arrears as at 30 June have not been published in the proposal of the State Budget.

f) Information on contingent liabilities for the budgetary year (guarantees)

Information on contingent liabilities for the budgetary year was not published in the proposal of the State Budget. Information on contingent liabilities for the budgetary year was published in the Annual Report on the Execution of the State Budget for 2012.

g) Information about where it is possible to find data on the impact of macroeconomic assumptions on budget revenue, expenditure and debt (sensitivity analysis)

No information on where the data on the impact of macroeconomic assumptions on budget revenue, expenditure and debt (sensitivity analysis) can be found was published in the proposal of the State Budget, though this information can be obtained in part from the Pre-accession Economic Programme 2012–2014.

Implementing activity 1.2

Update monthly reports on the execution of the state budget for 2013 with the data on expenses incurred according to the organisational classification and publish them no later than a month following the completion of the period to which they pertain

Implementing Body: Ministry of Finance

Start of Implementation Deadline: February 2013

The activity was implemented on time where technical capabilities permitted.

The Ministry of Finance has prepared monthly reports on the execution of the State Budget for 2013 which contain data on expenditure outturn according to organisational classification (first and second level – sections and chapters). Where technical capabilities permitted, the reports were published as planned, i.e. at the latest one month after expiry of the reporting period. Data on budget execution for an individual month become available once the system (general ledgers of the State Budget) is “locked”, i.e. after all the necessary bookings have been made. In cases where budgetary users failed to submit the documentation necessary for bookings on time, the general ledger could not be locked and the data on the execution of the budget were not ready for publication (this was the case with March 2013 data).

Implementing activity 1.3

Update the semi-annual report on the state budget execution for 2013 with:

a) An explanation about how the changed economic conditions and proposals of new statutory solutions will influence the planned revenue and expenditure by the end of the year; b) Modified revenue and expenditure plan for the budgetary year with detailed explanations within statutory deadlines; c) Information about where the updated revenue and expenditure forecasts for the two years following the budgetary year can be found.

Implementing Body: Ministry of Finance

Implementation Deadline: September 2013

The activity has been partly implemented.

The Ministry of Finance has prepared a semi-annual report on the execution of the budget for the first half of the current budgetary year, which has been partly updated with currently available data. The reason why the activity was not fully implemented is provided in detail under Implementing activity 1.1.

Implementing activity 1.4

Update the annual report on the state budget execution for 2012 with an explanation about the difference between the original macroeconomic forecasts for the budgetary year and the real outcomes and publish it within statutory deadlines

Implementing Body: Ministry of Finance

Implementation Deadline: June 2013

The activity has been partly implemented.

The difference between original macroeconomic forecasts for a budgetary year and the actual outturn is explained in the Annual Report on the Execution of the State Budget of the Republic of Croatia for 2012, under “Explanation of Macroeconomic Indicators in 2012”. The Annual Report on the Execution of the State Budget of the Republic of Croatia for 2012 also includes, as its integral part, the Annual Report on the Application of Fiscal Rules for 2012, which explains in further detail the difference between original macroeconomic forecasts for a budgetary year and the actual outturn. This information is available at: <http://www.mfin.hr/hr/drzavni-proracun-2012-godina>.

Article 11 of the Ordinance on the semi-annual and annual reports on the execution of the State Budget (OG 24/13) provides that the explanation of macroeconomic indicators, in addition to an explanation of developments in key macroeconomic indicators in the real, financial and international sectors during a reporting period, must also contain an overview of the differences between original macroeconomic forecasts for a budgetary year and the actual outturn. The Annual Report on the Execution of the State Budget for 2012 describes the differences between macroeconomic forecasts and the outturn in 2012 for key macroeconomic factors such as gross domestic product and its components and inflation, as confirmed in the Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Open Government Partnership Initiative in the Republic of Croatia for the period 2012–2013.

MEASURE 2. IMPROVING TRANSPARENCY OF BUSINESS ACTIVITY OF THE COMPANIES OF SPECIAL STATE INTEREST

Implementing activity 2.1

Publish annual business activity reports of the companies of special state interest no later than 30 September of the current year for the previous year.

Implementing Body: Ministry of Finance

Implementation Deadline: September 2013

The activity will be implemented on time.

An error occurred in the drafting of the Action Plan. The annual business activity report of the companies of special state interest has to be published by 30 September and not in June, so the report will be published by that date.

MEASURE 3. MAKING THE CONTENTS OF ALL BUDGETARY DOCUMENTS UNDERSTANDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE TO CITIZENS

Implementing activity 3.1

Make simple and easily understandable summaries – guidebooks for citizens (e.g. Budget for Citizens) of key budgetary documents (economic and fiscal policy guidelines, state budget proposal and projections, state budget and projections adopted by the Croatian Parliament, semi-annual and annual reports on the state budget execution) and publish them in a timely manner.

Implementing Body: Ministry of Finance

Start of Implementation Deadline: 2013

The activity is continuous and is implemented according to the plan.

A guidebook for citizens on the execution of the State Budget for 2012 has been prepared and published on the website of the Ministry of Finance at: <http://www.mfin.hr/hr/proracunske-publikacije> for the Annual Report on the Execution of the State Budget of the Republic of Croatia for 2102. The same is planned for economic and fiscal policy measures, the state budget proposal and projections and the semi-annual report on the execution of the state budget, once these documents are drafted.

MEASURE 4. IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY OF LOCAL BUDGET CONTENTS TO THE CITIZENS AND THE PUBLIC

Implementing activity 4.1

Give recommendations and instructions to all local and regional self-government units to publish, on their official web sites, key budgetary documents (budget proposal – when the executive bodies send it to the representative bodies; budget adopted by the representative body – when the representative body adopts it; semi-annual and annual report on execution – when the executive bodies send it to the representative bodies).

Implementing Body: Ministry of Finance

Implementation Deadline: July 2012 and July 2013

The activity has been fully implemented.

In accordance with the Budget Act (OG 87/08) and pursuant to the Economic and Fiscal Policy Guidelines of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for the period 2013–2015, the Ministry of Finance has drafted a recommendation and instructions for the preparation of the budget of local and regional self-government units and has published these documents on its official website: <http://www.mfin.hr/hr/lokalni-proracuni>.

Implementing activity 4.2

Make a standardized format for publishing guidebooks for citizens to accompany the local and regional self-government unit budgets and recommend their timely announcement to local authorities.

Implementing Body: Ministry of Finance

Implementation Deadline: July 2013

The activity has been fully implemented.

The Ministry of Finance has prepared a standardised format for preparing citizens guidebooks and has published it on its website: <http://www.mfin.hr/hr/lokalni-proracuni>.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES RELATED TO FISCAL TRANSPARENCY

Publication of public procurement documents

Ministries and other state administration bodies, such as the Central Procurement Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the State Property Management Administration, regularly publish public procurement-related documents (public procurement plans, overviews of public procurement contracts awarded and their execution, etc.) on their websites.

Openness to the public of the contracted content of health care in the Republic of Croatia

The Croatian Health Insurance Fund (HZZO) has launched several project activities in the area of fiscal transparency. The web application, available at: www.hzzo.hr or http://www.hzzo.hr/03_05_02.php, enables searches of the contracted content of health care in the Republic of Croatia, i.e. search of health care institutions and private health care providers who have entered into contracts with HZZO to provide out-patient specialist and polyclinic health care. The search provides insight into the contracted activities and the maximum monthly amount that can be claimed by the contracted entity per contracted activity. The linking of HZZO with the OIB (personal ID number) system through an on-line service has enabled analysis of data on deceased persons, obtained from the Ministry of Public Administration, which generated certain savings. Measures were also taken to ensure completely clear and fully transparent presentation of the financial operations of the Supplementary Health Insurance system, thereby contributing to fiscal transparency and responsibility within HZZO.

Transparency of data on the financing of tourism development projects

The Ministry of Tourism, on its website www.mint.hr/default.aspx?id=7936, under “grants and loans”, regularly publishes public invitations for grants to development projects in tourism as well as the outcome of these invitations, specifying the amounts and beneficiaries, thus providing insight into public spending.

Public openness of data on public sources of financing NGO projects and programmes

In accordance with the provisions of the Code of Good Practice, Standards and Benchmarks for the Allocation of Grants for Programmes and Projects of NGOs adopted by the Croatian Parliament, the public is regularly presented with data on all publicly financed projects and programmes of NGOs and civil society organisations, the financial amounts involved and project/programme leaders. The reports on the financial resources allocated from the State Budget to civil society projects and programmes in 2012 also gave detailed information on the procedures followed by all the involved government bodies in terms of the adopted standards for transparent implementation of tenders, as well as a detailed analyses of the areas, direct and indirect beneficiaries and territorial distribution of financed projects and programmes. To achieve better informing of the public, a detailed plan of all tenders planned in 2013 was published towards the end of 2012. For this purpose, Info days were also held, where the planned financing priorities were discussed with civil society organisations.

2. Access to information

In the area of Access to information, two measures and 12 implementing activities have been envisaged under the Action Plan.

MEASURE 5. IMPROVING THE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR EXERCISING THE RIGHT OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Implementing activity 5.1

Amend the Act on the Right of Access to Information

Implementing Body: Ministry of Public Administration

Implementation Deadline: September 2012

The activity has been fully implemented.

The draft proposal of the Act on the Right of Access to Information was prepared by an expert working group consisting of representatives of competent government institutions and representatives of civil society organisations. A one-month Internet consultation on the draft proposal of this Act was also held and a report on all accepted and rejected public consultation suggestions was also published. The draft Act was then submitted for opinion to the European Commission and following this, to the Parliament for further procedure. The Act on the Right of Access to Information was enacted at the 7th session of the Croatian Parliament on 15 February 2013 and published in the Official Gazette No. 25 on 28 February 2013.

Implementing activity 5.2

Harmonise the Data Confidentiality Act with the amendments to the Act on the Right of Access to Information, depending on the results of expert discussions and the discussions with the interested public

Implementing Body: Ministry of Public Administration
Implementation Deadline: September 2012

Activity implementation is underway.

In accordance with the Conclusion of the Coordinating Committee for Internal Affairs and State Property Management dated 23 July 2013, the Ministry of Interior has been designated as the authority competent for drafting the Draft Proposal of the Data Confidentiality Act.

MEASURE 6. IMPROVING ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON EXPENDING PUBLIC RESOURCES AND CONTENTS OF RELEVANT REGISTERS

Implementing activity 6.1

Evaluate the implementation of Political Activity and Electoral Campaign Financing Act

Implementing Body: Ministry of Public Administration
Implementation Deadline: December 2012

The activity has been fully implemented.

The expert working group for the evaluation of this Act, determination of guidelines and drafting of the proposal of amendments to this Act was established in April 2012, and consists of representatives of the Ministry of Public Administration, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice, State Election Commission, State Audit Office, Transparency International Croatia and GONG. The guidelines were determined in August, and were followed by the working Draft proposal of the Act on Amendments to the Act. Internet consultation with the interested public was held from 14 to 30 September 2012. The Proposal of the Act on Amendments to the Political Activity and Electoral Campaign Financing Act was passed at the 6th session of the Croatian Parliament on 14 December 2012 and the Act was enacted on the 7th session of the Croatian Parliament on 22 February 2013, and published in the Official Gazette No. 27/2013.

Implementing activity 6.2

Create prerequisites for the public announcement and permanent accessibility of a searchable database on electoral campaign and political party donors.

Implementing Body: Ministry of Public Administration
Implementation Deadline: December 2012

The activity has been fully implemented.

The Act on Amendments to the Political Activity and Electoral Campaign Financing Act determines, among other things, that annual financial statements and electoral campaign financing reports be permanently published on the HIDRA website, thus fulfilling this implementing activity.

Financial statements, in accordance with the Act, also contain specified donor data (personal name/name and address), date of donation payment, the amount and type of donation, while permanent publishing of financial statements enables permanent access to such data and database searchability by various elements. Reports on donations and electoral campaign expenses are also publicly disclosed on the websites of political parties, independent representatives and independent members of the representative bodies of local and regional self-government units, i.e. on the websites of the participants in elections who are all obligated to notify the State Election Commission of the website where they publish their reports.

With the Act on Amendments to the Political Activity and Electoral Campaign Financing Act, the preconditions have been fully met for public disclosure and permanent accessibility of data on electoral campaign donors and regular political activity donors, which now have to be implemented in practice.

Implementing activity 6.3

On the website www.javnanabava.hr provide a consolidated and publicly available list of links to individual “Registers of public procurement contracts and framework agreements” which were published individually.

Implementing Body: Ministry of Economy

Start of Implementation Deadline: December 2012

The activity is continuous and is being fully implemented.

Based on the links to the published Registers received by the contracting authorities, the Directorate for the Public Procurement System of the Ministry of Economy merges these links into a list published on the Public Procurement Portal (www.javnanabava.hr). The list of these links is regularly updated as new links are received by the contracting authorities. The last update was made on 22 July 2013.

To ensure full implementation of this measure in practice, the Directorate for the Public Procurement System of the Ministry of Economy published a Reminder of this obligation arising from the Public Procurement Act on its website on 2 May 2013 and forwarded this Reminder through the Electronic Public Procurement Classifieds of the Republic of Croatia to all registered contracting authorities in the system. The contracting authorities were invited to examine the Reminder carefully and, provided they have not met all the relevant provisions, to do so as soon as possible.

However, it should be noted that a large number of contracting authorities did not enter into contracts of HRK 70,000.00 or more and thus were not subject to the obligation of publication in the Register. Therefore, the absence of a link to a contracting authority on the Public Procurement Portal does not mean that a contracting authority has failed to comply with the Public Procurement Act.

To ensure updated and accurate information, when receiving a link, the Directorate for the Public Procurement System verifies whether the link is operational at that moment, though links cannot be checked every day. Also, in the case where the Directorate for the Public Procurement System receives information that a contracting authority has not

met a data publication obligation, the Directorate will immediately contact the contracting authority concerned.

Implementing activity 6.4**Publish public procurement contracts and framework agreements concluded by the Central Procurement Office on the Office's website.****Implementing Body:** Central Procurement Office**Start of Implementation Deadline:** December 2012**The activity is continuous and is being fully implemented.**

The Central Procurement Office (hereinafter: Procurement Office) has, in accordance with the applicable legislative provisions, taken steps to fulfil this implementing activity.

It should be noted that, pursuant to the provision of Article 105, paragraph 6 of the Public Procurement Act (OG 90/11, 83/13), the responsibility of the contracting parties for fulfilment of obligations under a public procurement contract is subject to the relevant provisions of the Civil Obligations Act. Pursuant to the provisions of the Civil Obligations Act, participants in compulsory obligations are equal and obliged to cooperate for the purpose of full and orderly fulfilment of obligations and exercise of rights arising thereunder. It is forbidden to exercise rights under compulsory obligations which are contrary to the purpose for which they are determined or recognised by a regulation. The Procurement Office therefore considered, according to the above legislative provisions, that it is obliged to inform all tenderers with whom it has entered into framework agreements about the publication of the content of framework agreements.

Accordingly, the Procurement Office sent out a memorandum (requesting return receipts) dated 3 December 2012, informing all tenderers with whom it had entered into framework agreements that, following expiry of a deadline of 8 days from the receipt of the memorandum, it would publish all framework agreements entered into, taking account not to publish sections of documentation classified as a business secret, in accordance with special regulations.

It was exactly in this part that particular challenges and technical difficulties were encountered in certain procurement categories (premises cleaning and office supplies) in the framework of the implementation of the said measure, since return receipts were not returned by the tenderers within regular time limits and it was therefore necessary to repeat the procedure. After all return receipts were returned, in May 2013, the Procurement Office published all framework agreements valid or being implemented at that moment, except those sections of agreements or annexes thereto designated as a business secret. It is the obligation of the contracting authority not to publish sections of documentation designated as a business secret in accordance with Article 16, paragraph 1 of the Public Procurement Act, which provides that "without prejudice to the provisions of this Act, in particular those relating to the publication of contract award notices and the content of decisions and minutes which the contracting authority/entity submits to candidates and tenderers, the contracting authority/entity shall safeguard and may not disclose information included in the documentation of economic operators which they have designated as a business secret in accordance with special regulations."

It should also be noted that as regards ongoing public procurement processes, the Procurement Office publishes not only the content of framework agreements on its website but also entire public procurement processes, from tender documents to the award decision, thus familiarising the public with each phase of the public procurement process. The framework agreement entered into with the selected tenderer is the result of the implemented public procurement process and as previously stated, is no longer a part of the public procurement process but is regulated by legislative provisions of the law of obligations and it is therefore important that the public be familiar with the entire process and each phase of its procedures.

The Procurement Office is also of the opinion that while it is necessary to publish the content of those framework agreements which are underway and which are being executed, it is also necessary to disclose, upon request of the interested public, framework agreements entered into in public procurement procedures which are no longer underway. Article 4 of the Regulation on public procurement notices (OG 10/12) determines all types of public procurement notices, one of which is the contract award notice. In this context, it can be considered that the Procurement Office has, as regards current public procurement procedures, done more than what is legally prescribed, since not only is the contract award notice disclosed to the public but also the content of the framework agreements. Also, as provided by Article 9 of the Regulation, every public procurement notice and its supporting documents must be publicly available in the Electronic Public Procurement Classifieds of the Republic of Croatia for at least one year from the date of publication of the public procurement notice, and every public procurement notice must be available in the archives of the Electronic Public Procurement Classifieds of the Republic of Croatia for at least four years from the date of its publication. This implies unlimited and free-of-charge access and search of public procurement notices to the central state administration body responsible for the public procurement system, the State Commission for the Supervision of Public Procurement Procedures and the State Attorney's Office of the Republic of Croatia. This provides further evidence that the principle of transparency has been met and that all the competent authorities are able to obtain insight into current public procurement procedures, and that, upon the request from of the interested public, framework agreements in public procurement procedures no longer underway can also be accessed.

In addition to the content of each phase of public procurement procedures, the Procurement Office will continue to publish the content of agreements entered into and framework agreements to be executed on its website.

Implementing activity 6.5

Publish all concession contracts for the provision of television and radio media services (without tender documents).

Implementing Body: Electronic Media Agency

Start of Implementation Deadline: November 2012

The activity is continuous and is being fully implemented.

All concession contracts for the provision of television and radio media services (without tender documents) have been scanned and published on the website of the Electronic Media Agency at: www.e-mediji.hr.

In the context of its activities, the Electronic Media Agency has also been exerting constant efforts and working proactively towards publication of an ever increasing amount of information relating to its work and which is of interest to the public.

Implementation activity 6.6

Create prerequisites for publishing information on financial and non-financial property managed by the state

Implementing Body: Central State Administrative Office for State Property Management

Start of Implementation Deadline: June 2013

Activity implementation is underway.

The State Property Management and Disposal Act (OG 94/13) provides for the principle of openness to the public in state property management, which is ensured through clear rules and criteria of state property management in regulations and other acts adopted pursuant to the Act and their public disclosure, determination of the objectives of state property management and disposal in the Strategy of State Property Management and Disposal and the Plan of State Property Management and Disposal, the provision of regular information to the public about the activities of state property management bodies, public disclosure of major decisions on state property management and disposal and keeping of the register of state property.

The Register of State Property will provide public insight into state property data, except in the case of property which is used for the purpose of keeping sovereignty, independence and defending the territorial integrity of the Republic of Croatia. By 19 August 2013, the Government Asset Management Agency had entered 367,465 items into the Register. The deadline for the publication of the Register is end-2013.

Implementing activity 6.7

Create prerequisites in the strategic and financial plans of the Ministry of Finance for designing and announcing a publicly searchable database on payments executed through the Treasury Single Account in line with the stipulated budget classifications taking into consideration other ongoing IT projects.

Implementing Body: Ministry of Finance

Implementation Deadline: December 2012

The activity has been implemented.

As stated in the Strategy of Government programmes for 2013–2015, adopted by the Government of the Republic of Croatia on 12 July 2012, a publicly searchable database on payments executed through the Treasury Single Account will be set up. The same has been stated in the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Finance 2013–2015. Both documents are available at: <http://www.mfin.hr/hr/stratesko-planiranje>.

Implementing activity 6.8

Recommend to local and regional self-government units the timely announcement of the representative bodies' sessions' agendas and all session materials on their official websites, in line with the provisions of their general acts about the obligatory delivery of session materials to the members of the representative body no later than five days before the session takes place.

Implementing Body: Ministry of Public Administration

Implementation Deadline: June 2012

The activity has been implemented.

The Ministry of Public Administration sent the requested recommendation on 8 June 2012 via state administration offices in counties, which forwarded it to all units in their areas and reported to the Ministry on the implemented activity on 16 July 2012.

In this recommendation, the Ministry has drawn attention to the provisions of the Act on the Right of Access to Information and the Act on Local and Regional Self-Government, which oblige local and regional self-governments units to publish their decisions in official journals and in the IT media. The recommendation also pointed out that the fulfilment of this obligation contributes to achieving the principle of openness to the public and transparency in the work of local and regional self-government units. Stating that the fulfilment of these rules is in the interest of not only citizens, who would thus have insight in the work of local self-government units, but that it is also in the interest of self-governments units which, by providing information on their activities, strengthen citizens' confidence and contribute to the development of a high quality and efficient local self-government, the Ministry has issued a recommendation to all local self-government units to ensure timely publication of representative bodies session agendas and session materials on the official websites of the units.

Implementing activity 6.9

Envisage in the bill on accounting for NGOs the obligation of making NGOs financial statements publicly available through the NGO Register

Implementing Body: Ministry of Finance

Implementation Deadline: December 2013

Activity implementation is underway.

Pursuant to the Act on Regulatory Impact Assessment, a preliminary assessment was made using the prescribed form and propositions were put forward on the content of the regulation for the proposal of the act on accounting for NGOs, which envisage public disclosure of financial statements of non-profit organisations through the NPO Register. The propositions were published on the website of the Ministry of Finance and were available for consultations. Public consultations were open until 2 September 2013. The first draft of the proposal of the Act on Accounting for NGOs was completed in early September 2013 and will be used as a basis for further intensive activities on the part of the working group set up pursuant to a decision of the Minister of Finance.

Implementing activity 6.10

Improve the public database on grants awarded to civil society organisations for projects and programmes of public interest

Implementing Body: The Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs
Start of Implementation Deadline: June 2012

Activity implementation is underway.

In accordance with the conclusions of the Governmental Interdepartmental Committee for Coordination of Policies for Funding Projects and Programmes Implemented by NGOs Financed from the State Budget, the National Foundation for Civil Society Development and the Office for Cooperation with NGOs carried out a number of activities with the aim of establishing in all government bodies a standardised information system for monitoring financial support to NGOs, called Potpora Plus. This information system is intended to additionally improve competition implementation procedures and monitoring and evaluating projects and programmes of NGOs financed by the State Budget. All state administration bodies involved in grant awarding procedures for projects and programmes of civil society organisations have been using this system since 2013. In March 2013, the system was adjusted to enable the introduction of tokens, which will ensure more secure server access. Once all the government bodies begin to use the information system, by end-2013, we expect to see the system's upgrading, with the introduction of electronic registration for all public authority competitions at the national level, while a separate portal www.financijskepodrske.hr will make all information on the results of publicly-funded civil society organisations' projects and programmes publicly available. To prepare state administration bodies for use of the Potpora Plus programme, the National Foundation for Civil Society Development, in cooperation with the Office for Cooperation with NGOs held meetings and launched educational activities in 18 state administration bodies. The efficacy of the implementation of this activity is regularly monitored through the work of the Interdepartmental Committee for Coordination of Policies for Funding Projects and Programmes Implemented by NGOs Financed from the State Budget which held six sessions until July 2013, as well as through separate coordinating meetings of civil servants responsible for the tasks of cooperation with the civil society.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES RELATED TO ACCESS TO INFORMATION

On their official websites, the ministries inform the citizens of their right of access to information and how they can exercise this right. These websites include special sections with information on consultations with the interested public, where the ministries publish information on consultations underway. Even though tangible results in the implementation of the Code of Practice on Consultation will only be seen after the drafting of the Report on implementation for 2013, all ministries and other state administration bodies have already reported an increase in the number of requests for information. In a large number of cases, in addition to Internet consultations with the interested public, fora, public discussions and round table discussions are also held. Information on ministry activities is regularly updated and information on consultations with the interested public is published. Website content is adjusted in such a way as to ensure that the information relevant for citizens is easily accessible and retrievable. For instance, by publishing frequently asked Q&A, the ministries regularly publish documents on their websites in accordance with their legal obligations, such as public procurement-related documents.

The Government of the Republic of Croatia is very active on social networks. As shown by Twiplomacy, a Burson-Marsteller (USA) research project, of the 505 analysed profiles of governments, heads of government, ministers of foreign affairs and global leaders profiles, the Croatian government has one of the most active Twitter profiles and is again one of the 25 best-linked politics Twitter accounts, taking third place in terms of activity. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Crafts are also active on social networks (Facebook, Twitter), publishing relevant information within their jurisdictions.

The Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, in addition to the new public website introduced in January 2013, also features the public websites of most of the diplomatic missions of the Republic of Croatia abroad, where news, information on projects, relevant documents and forms within the jurisdiction of the work of the Ministry are published with the aim of enhancing their accessibility. This relates in particular to access to practical information of particular interest to a large number of citizens, such as updated recommendations regarding foreign travel, visas and other most frequently asked questions in the area of consular affairs. The Facebook site of the Ministry is also very frequented, as is the Twitter profile of the Ministry which has been assessed by Twiplomacy as very active, averaging two publications per day, and is very well connected with other international relevant institutions on Twitter.

Some ministries have also published or are preparing publication of registers or have updated the existing registers.

The Ministry of Veterans' Affairs has made a list of Croatian Homeland War veterans from the Register of Homeland War Veterans available to the public in electronic format. The publication of the Register contributes to data accessibility and fiscal transparency and is also used as a tool in numerous research projects, such as a study of morbidity and mortality of Croatian Homeland War veterans and their family members, which enabled a very important phase in the implementation of this project and which, should the study reveal departures in morbidity and mortality rates of veterans and their family members from the general population, will enable formulation and implementation of scientifically-based prevention programmes. In 2013, the Ministry of Veterans' Affairs published a home loans priority list for the first time, and created a special section on its website where all essential information and forms required for the provision of housing can be found.

As regards the public procurement system, in addition to the website *javnabava.hr*, the Ministry of Economy achieves additional transparency through publication of relevant documents on the standardised platform of the Electronic Public Procurement Classifieds of the Republic of Croatia, which ensures simple, quick and free-of-charge access to public procurement procedures. Significant improvement in transparency and access to data has also been achieved through mandatory publication of procurement plans and registers of agreements and framework agreements by individual contracting authorities. On the website of the Ministry of Economy, the Directorate for the Public Procurement System maintains a list of contacts whom interested stakeholders may contact with questions relating to the implementation of regulations in the area of public procurement. The Directorate has set up a call centre which can be contacted twice a week for additional consultations and also organises Open Day events where interested

stakeholders can get all information related to the application of regulations in the area of public procurement.

In 2013, the Ministry of Agriculture created an independent website for the Veterinary and Food Safety Directorate (*veterinarstvo.hr*), as a functional service providing information on how citizen or users may exercise their rights before state administration bodies. This service enhances transparency through the publication of registers, reports, official control plans, instructions on the implementation of official controls, etc. The publication of addresses and contact information on veterinary offices and forms enhances efficacy of public service provision.

The Ministry of Labour and the Pension System is in the final phase of completion of activities on the preparation and release of an electronic register of employers and trade union associations, as well as records on the representativeness of trade unions in collective bargaining.

The Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds has created a web portal www.strukturnifondovi.hr, which serves as a central site for information on EU funds, including competitions, guide to EU funds and information on all training activities organised by government and public bodies and regional and development agencies. This web portal also provides an overview of the most frequently asked questions and answers, news and examples of successful projects.

The Ministry of Public Administration has enabled voters to check the Register of Voters for their data, the number of voters registered at their address or any address in the Republic of Croatia.

The Ministry of Environmental and Nature Protection implemented the project “Establishment of Centres for Implementation of IPPC at the Regional Level in Croatia” which helped raise public awareness and improve the right of access to information. In the context of the project, numerous workshops were held, including 15 workshops on public participation in the procedure of issuing IPPC permits held nationwide. In addition to these, another 35 workshops were held on the implementation procedures of the IPPC Directive for operators, authorised persons and representatives of competent bodies. This project envisages the establishment of an IPPC Forum, the purpose of which will be the provision of information, links, training and participation in the development of BAT.

The Office for Cooperation with NGOs has created an Internet platform for monitoring the implementation of the National Strategy for the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development 2012–2016 (<http://strategija.uzuvrh.hr/>). Based on the principles of transparency and openness, the Platform offers an innovative approach to monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the National Strategy. This Platform was developed to excite the interest of the general public and the media for more active inclusion in the monitoring of implementation of all 27 measures and 91 implementing activities of the National Strategy. In a simple and clear manner, it ensures monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Strategy in real time, instead of annual progress reports used so far and enables all interested parties to give their comments. The Platform gives information on the Strategy, implementation status of

individual activities (underway, completed, not launched yet) and detailed information on the implementation of each individual activity, with accompanying documents, photographs, video recordings, etc. It is also connected to the project page on Facebook, thereby providing information to the public on new developments in the implementation of the Strategy.

The Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities coordinated the drafting of the National Programme for Protection and Promotion of Human Rights 2013–2016, which recognises the right of access to information as a priority issue. More specifically, the National Programme has recognised the importance of raising awareness of users to the right to information regarding the need and importance of exercising the right of access to information and importance of systematic training of information officers on the right of access to information. This is reflected in measures that are to be continuously implemented over the four-year period from 2013 to 2016.

The Croatian Health Insurance Fund (HZZO) has carried out several project activities in the area of right of access to information. In mid-March 2013, HZZO and Croatian Autoclub (Hrvatski Autoklub; HAK) published the following on HAK's interactive web map <http://map.hak.hr/>: route planner, domestic and foreign applications for smart phones, a list of 6500 medical institutions under contract with HZZO in over 3200 locations, thereby launching a new joint online service intended for Croatian citizens, the health system and foreign tourists. The information on institutions is divided into the following categories: hospitals, primary health care providers, health care centres, pharmacies, emergency medical centres, medical laboratories, home care, health care, and public health institutes. From January to May 2013, a total of 4834 calls to White Telephones were registered, averaging 46 calls per day. Of these, 524 calls or 10.84% of calls were unanswered. As regards the structure of the calls, 27% were related to HZZO, 19% to hospitals and specialist and conciliary services and 18% to primary health care. Since end-October 2012, the White Telephone has also included an eBooking menu intended for questions of insured persons concerning eBooking. In the framework of the White Telephone service, an e-mail address for users is provided (pitajte.nas@hzzo.hr). The Contact Centre (Helpdesk) number 062 11 22 33 for support in primary health care had a total of 10,000 answered calls in the first six months of 2013. A menu for eReferrals and eBooking was also introduced to help users within the health care system, i.e. primary health care providers in the process of eBooking. It is also used for reporting problems in the eReferrals and eBooking systems for hospitals. Information on waiting lists in the hospital health care system is available for citizens at: www.hzzo.hr and www.cezih.hr.

3. Using information technology

In the area of using information technology, one measure and four implementing activities were envisaged under the Action Plan, with the Ministry of Public Administration as the Implementing Body.

MEASURE 7. ENSURING TRANSPARENT WORK OF PUBLIC AUTHORITY BODIES IN THE SERVICE OF EXERCISING CITIZEN RIGHTS

Implementing activity 7.1

Substantial and technical enhancement of *Moja uprava* web portal as a functional service, which contains all the information about how citizens and beneficiaries can exercise their rights before state administration bodies

Implementing Body: Ministry of Public Administration

Start of Implementation Deadline: December 2012

Activity implementation is underway.

The Commission of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Public Administration Informatisation established a Working Group for the standardisation of solutions for user access in May 2012. The project task of the Working Group is to create a proposal of system optimisation for user access to public administration (web systems, counters, call centres), which is to contain exact measures for the improvement of the *Moja uprava* system from the technical and organisational aspect and in terms of its content; measures for turning the *Moja uprava* system into a unified interface for providing support in the communication with users through all communication channels, their optimisation, as well as improvement of the accessibility of e-services online. The Working Group's first meeting was held on 17 May, resulting in the drafting of Guidelines for the design and realisation of the technical support for the procurement of implementation services, maintenance services, support and development services as a precondition for the implementation of the planned activities. Based on these documents, public procurement has been carried out and a new central government portal is expected to be established by the end of 2013.

Implementing activity 7.2

Consolidation and interlinking of all the information pertaining to the status of natural and legal persons, whose records are kept by individual public authority bodies

Implementing Body: Ministry of Public Administration

Implementation Deadline: December 2013

Activity implementation is underway.

The Commission of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Public Administration Informatisation established a Working Group for key registers and electronic data exchange in May 2012. In the course of its work, the Working Group established a problem of inconsistency among registers and submitted to the Government a Proposal of the Conclusion on Keeping and Updating Key Registers, aiming at aligning the contents of key registers with the actual situation. In the Conclusion, the Ministry of Public Administration undertook to prepare an act that will regulate this area. In addition, as part of the Working Group activities and in co-operation with the Dutch MATRA-flex project, a specification of a Meta-register is being prepared, i.e. a register that contains descriptions of all other registers. Particular attention was paid to the financing of the creation and use of registers.

Implementing activity 7.3

Setting up a scheme of information from other bodies of state administration at *Moja uprava* web portal.

Implementing Body: Ministry of Public Administration

Start of Implementation Deadline: December 2012

Activity implementation is underway.

A technical specification of a standardised system for the publication of information for reuse by state administration bodies is being prepared.

Implementing activity 7.4

Establish and regularly enhance the system of providing public services through the Internet

Implementing Body: Ministry of Public Administration

Start of Implementation Deadline: December 2012

Activity implementation is underway.

The Ministry of Public Administration has co-ordinated a survey of the European Commission on the accessibility of e-public services (*eGovernment benchmarking*). The Results of the survey were published in May 2013 on the website of the European Commission and were used as a foundation in the preparation of the programme of development of e-public services. The programme has been published on the website of the Ministry of Public Administration and contains instructions and guidelines for further development of user oriented e-services and their interlinking with the system *e-Građani* (e-Citizens).

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES LINKED TO USING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

In the period from April 2012 to July 2013, the Ministry of Finance, Customs Administration, carried out several different projects of using information technology for the purpose of achieving fiscal transparency, better efficiency of the public administration and facilitating the work of the economy relating to imports, exports or transit of goods and the customs procedures with economic impact, such as:

- Established the G2B service – for the purpose of paperless communication with customs administrations of Member States and economies in the region (*e-Carina* (*e-Customs*)), which includes electronic communication among participants in the customs procedure, i.e. communication between the Customs Office and economic operators;
- Intrastat – upon joining the EU, the Republic of Croatia became a part of the EU common market, implying the free transit of goods with EU Member States. As a result, it will no longer be possible to obtain data on the trade in goods between Republic of Croatia and other Member States from joint customs declarations (JCD). To replace the JCD, a system of collecting data on the trade in goods directly from economic operators - the Intrastat - was developed in the European Union. As of the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the EU, this system has also been applied in the Republic of Croatia;

- EMCS – Excise Movement and Control System is an EU informatisation project, envisaged and designed as a computerised system of monitoring movements of excise goods (energy products, alcohol and alcoholic beverages, and tobacco products) under suspension of excise duty within the EU, which enables electronic data exchange among authorised business entities and competent authorities in Member States (administrations competent for excise duties), with an aim to effectively monitor and control the movement of excise goods under suspension of excise duty;
- ICS – for all goods entering the customs territory of the European Union, import formalities must be satisfied, including protective risk analysis. For that purpose, the entry summary declaration is lodged with the customs office of entry which includes data important for the risk analysis and proper implementation of the customs control primarily for security purposes. The processing of summary declarations is carried out via information technology and the Trans-European customs system carrying out the computer processing called the Import Control System or the ICS. The development and implementation of a fully operational ICS system has been one of the main tasks set before the Republic of Croatia by the European Commission prior to its accession to the EU;
- HRAIS – is the national automated imports system which includes the system for processing import declarations. It is based on the electronic import customs declaration and electronic data exchange between the Customs Administration and economic operators enabling paperless communication;
- ECS – enables the customs offices competent for export procedures (export customs offices and customs offices of exit) to exchange electronic messages in order to automate the administrative flow of the operation, to elevate the effectiveness of controls against tax and customs fraud, to expedite the flow of goods and to contribute to better supply chain security;
- The establishment of A and B accounts – as of the date of accession a portion of funds collected via customs duties remains in the Republic of Croatia, while the remaining portion is to be paid into the EU budget. In order for the EU and the Republic of Croatia to track the funds raised, ensured and collected, the Customs Administration developed a system to track payables stemming from imports into the Republic of Croatia.

The Tax Administration of the Ministry of Finance implemented the Project (RAMP/C/03-13/QCBS) *"Tax Administration's External and Internal Communication"* as part of the Revenue Administration Modernization Project financed via a World Bank loan. Its implementation lasted from February 2012 until June 2013 and the objectives achieved were as follows: 1. development of an external and internal communication strategy, 2. improvement of the current and development of new forms of internal and external communication, 3. creation of a visual identity of the Tax Administration, 4. redesign of the current (public) website, so that as of July 2013 the Tax Administration has a completely new, modern website offering new functions and easily accessible information for different groups of taxpayers. Within the framework of the IPA 2008 FPP RAC project *"Development of IT solution for exchange of information related to the Savings Directive"* an application was developed for the collection of information/data on the savings income in the form of interest payments, in line with Council Directive 2003/48/EC.

The Tax Administration also launched a series of electronic services enabling simpler and faster communication between taxpayers and Tax Administration officers:

- *ePorezna* – is a series of electronic services provided by the Tax Administration, enabling all taxpayers to submit their digitally signed forms by electronic means, to view the status of previously submitted forms and to view the state of their tax or accounting cards, all with a view of enabling them to meet their obligations towards the Tax Administration in a simpler and faster way. The service provides for electronic communication with taxpayers using the Internet as a communication infrastructure. A secure exchange of electronic documents between the taxpayer and the Tax Administration is a part of this service. The system meets high security standards in order to ensure secure and uncompromised transfer of data in electronic transactions.
- *e-nadzor* – the project of electronic audit has been implemented (e-audit). As part of the project, 52 licences for the ACL tool for electronic audit have been installed on the laptops of inspectors and they have undergone the necessary training. The usage of the tool substantially shortens the time necessary for the audit of the largest taxpayers. The project has been finalised and inspectors have started carrying out e-audit.
- *e-learning* – is a project that substantially improves the system of employee training. All officers will undergo the relevant training, using modern IT technology at a reduced cost. The first modules have been prepared relating to the topics of fighting corruption and news regarding the value added tax.
- *eOvrha* – The e-Ovrha project was launched at the beginning of 2012, aiming to ensure a better efficiency and control of the execution proceedings and the cost-effectiveness of the execution of monetary funds by cutting costs for submission of decisions on blocked accounts to the Financial Agency. The project has been structured in three stages. The first stage, relating to the electronic delivery of decisions on the executions of monetary assets to the Financial Agency, has been completed. Electronic delivery is carried out via the eOvrha portal which enables efficient control of the enforcement procedure via the enforcement of monetary assets so that all issued decisions are visible on the eOvrha portal. In the case a decision has not been delivered to the Financial Agency in due time, the portal will automatically signal that the decision has not been enforced.

Additional projects have been planned, aiming to contribute to the efficiency of the Tax Administration in exercising its tasks and strengthening its capacity.

The Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning introduced the physical planning information system (ISPU) as a foundation for the system of *e-dozvole* (e-building permit). The Geoportal, land register and physical plans have been united into a single unit providing the end user with simple access to information on spatial rights. The objective is to make the physical planning system transparent and accessible to all and to enable simple overview and control of all relevant processes. The system will be upgraded and expanded gradually, and is in its current form available on the website of the Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning (www.mgipu.hr). The system of *e-dozvole* has been developed simultaneously, providing a unified document for construction across the territory of the Republic of Croatia. The application is planned to become operational as of 1 January 2014. The project of a centralised system will be implemented across the country and will be applied in all counties, major cities and

county capitals where the documents are issued. The objectives of the project are: to enhance the quality of administrative and non-administrative procedures through simple and speedy informatisation and automatisisation of the enactment procedures; to ensure uniform quality service and conditions for administrative and technical processing of cases and document issued across the country; to ensure openness and transparency of the system to the public and applicants by providing them with access to their cases and an overview of their current status; to inform applicants in real time on the current and historic processing of cases at the national level; to reduce costs related to administrative and technical processing of cases and document issuing by reducing the paper volume of the documentation; to optimise and simplify procedural tasks for employees (increasing productivity) and consolidation of data into standardised formats and repositories (resource optimisation); to provide a comprehensive overview of the process of case processing and ensuring transparency; to enable alignment with external bodies and registers and the use of electronic signatures.

Furthermore, once the Geoportal finally becomes operational, the Ministry plans the following projects:

- *Investicijski portal poduzetničkih zona RH (Investment portal of entrepreneurial zones in the Republic of Croatia)* – in co-operation with the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Crafts;
- *Investicijski portal odobrenih istražnih prostora i odobrenih eksploatacijskih polja (Investment portal of approved exploration zones and exploitation fields)* – in co-operation with the Ministry of the Sea;
- *Investicijski portal turističkih zona (Investment portal of tourist areas)* (on state land);
- *Investicijski portal energetskeg sustava (Investment portal of the energy system)* – in co-operation with the Ministry of Entrepreneurship;
- the linking of the information system in the area of environmental and nature protection – in co-operation with the Ministry of Environmental and Nature Protection.

The Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Crafts started developing an information system under the name *Registar potpora (Registry of incentives)* in 2008, in which it embedded programme solutions for the implementation and monitoring of state incentives to small-entrepreneurs under the programme of incentives to small and medium-sized entrepreneurs, crafts and co-operatives. The existing programme solution of the Ministry enables comprehensive processing of applications submitted by entrepreneurs, and as of this year, the Register is technologically linked to other information systems (FINA, REGOS) which substantially reduced costs for documents that applicants for subsidies are required to submit in public tenders. The Register is also linked to the website of the Ministry where the information on incentives (total allocated funds, amounts and names of entities that have been awarded funds) is published and by entering their OIB (unique identification number) entrepreneurs can view the status of their application.

The Amendments to the Small Business Development Promotion Act provide for the establishment of a Small Business Central Information System (SISMG). Connecting all ministries and local government units that promote the development of small business

into a small business central information system, i.e. of all competent authorities under this Act, will generate added value by saving entrepreneurs time, cutting their costs, and ensuring they are better informed. The SISMG will additionally contribute to further removal of administrative hurdles and substantially improve the efficiency of the Ministry's operations. It is also an anti-corruption tool.

Since April 2012, as part of the information system of the Croatian Craft Register, a series of projects and activities have been carried out that resulted in substantial financial cuts and more efficient and secure operation of the system (more efficient implementation of the administrative procedure of entry into the Craft Register) and provision of better quality service to external users (some 3000 mutually unrelated Internet visits – from state administration bodies, citizens, banks, public notaries, insurance companies, craftsmen current and future, companies, etc.) paired with the improvement of access to information relating to the Croatian Craft Register. More efficient and secure system operation has been enabled through the procurement of new server equipment, introduction of new technologies (virtualisation), introduction of a double link from the central information system of the Craft Register to (and from) the web, by enhancing the capacity of the link and through additional organisational improvements. Better quality service, primarily to citizens and to all of the above-mentioned users of the Craft Register has been enabled through more reliable and efficient operation of its information system, through technological development and ongoing activity in the enhancement of the quality (clean-up) of data entered in the Craft Register database. The register has been available to the public free of charge for several years now. At first, data updating was performed with a time lag of one day (and accuracy level much below the current level), while after recent improvements, updating is performed in real time and fully updated data are available without a time lag. Data quality has been substantially improved (work is ongoing) thanks to the software solutions applied. These solutions indicate possible problems to registry operators and prevent the generation of new errors. Within the framework of the Craft Register information system, a new, XML-based, web service for data delivery from the Craft Register has been put in place. Connecting new users of this service, i.e. the Agency for Environmental Protection and the Commercial Services Agency (AKD), is underway. The latter has been made competent for managing the operation of the national system of digital tachographs of the Republic of Croatia and issuing memory cards for the digital tachograph.

Through the implementation of the IPA 2009 “*Roll-out of ICMS to Selected Municipal Courts*”, the Ministry of Justice introduced an electronic service intended for court officials and the general public named ePredmet (e-Case), as a public and free service offering access to basic data on court cases, thereby enhancing the provision of electronic services to citizens and enabling public and free access to basic information on court cases.

The Ministry of Social Policy and Youth made available an application on its website through which all organisers of volunteering services in the Republic of Croatia can meet their legal reporting requirements as regards the number of volunteers, hours of volunteer work and activities over the previous year.

The Ministry of Tourism established a centralised system of classification of hospitality and tourism establishments within the competence of the Ministry of Tourism and an information system for monitoring and developing incentive programmes in tourism, as well as a program of the registry of local tourist board offices.

The Ministry of Interior completed the first phase of the introduction of the new electronic personal identification card. In this project phase, a new, redesigned personal identification card was introduced with improved security features and the personal identification number (OIB) of the carrier. In the second phase, personal identification cards will include an electronic data carrier (chip) that will include the digital signature of the card carrier. The purpose of introducing the electronic personal identification card is to promote and keep in touch with the development of the IT society and the development of the state administration's information system (e-uprava) e-Administration, as well as to provide a user-oriented public service. As of 1 July 2013, the issue of new electronic drivers' licences started, in line with EU Directives. The application procedures for the issuance of personal identification cards and drivers' licences have been simplified. Citizens are no longer required to fill in forms but need to verify the accuracy of data printed out from the IT system.

Biometric residence permits, residence cards and cross-border passes have been introduced, strengthening the protective element which is key in preventing forgery and other misuse. In addition, the functionality of the Residence Registry has been expanded and it has been linked to the Register of physical units of the State Geodetic Administration, i.e. data exchange with web services has been established. The Minister of the Interior has been provided access to the EURIDAC system (linked to the EU system) and to the EUROPOL IT system. Within the framework of the Red Button project, a website has been created for reporting abuse of children and young persons. A series of projects has been completed in the area of data protection and security (secure exchange of personal data via the telecommunication system). In addition, a web service has enabled data to be used by local government units in order to improve their service to citizens.

The Ministry of Public Administration, the e-Croatia Directorate, has been working continuously on further development and improvement of electronic administration. Within the framework of these activities, the most important are those relating to support to the work of the Commission for Public Administration Informatisation through the managing of different working groups competent for the issues of IT networks, registry organisation, electronic identity, user access, standardisation of procuring ICT solutions.

It is noteworthy that the co-ordination and co-operation of state administration bodies initiated the electronic data exchange with the Croatian Health Insurance Fund and the Croatian Pension Insurance Institute via the OIB system, resulting in savings to the state budget and an experience which will be useful in the linking of other state administration bodies, acceleration of procedures, cost rationalisation and better utilisation of resources and results of the project of introduction of the OIB system.

The need and the possibilities of linking or integrating existing IT networks of bodies established under public law are investigated, aiming to find efficient models to expand

these measures, enable wide use of network services, multimedia services and indirectly wider availability of other services provided by bodies established under public law to their users.

The project of establishing a central government portal, *gov.hr*, has been launched, which will unite the information and content from the websites of all state administration bodies.

The pilot project of the National Identification and Authentication System (NIAS) has been completed. Following the establishment of *gov.hr*, NIAS will become one of its integral parts, providing standardised, secure and confidential access to personal data of citizens and electronic services in different IT systems of the public administration.

The pilot project of the system for personal user access to public administration is also underway. This system, which will also be an integral part of the *gov.hr* system, will give citizens personal access to personal information via the Internet.

The pilot project of the portal for publication of public sector information has also been launched, aiming to improve public sector data availability in one spot.

An agreement has been signed with the DLM Forum on the right to translate the European specification for MoReq2010 records system management from English into Croatian, a significant step that will provide impetus to the development of electronic office operations in all bodies established under public law.

In December 2012, the Government of the Republic of Croatia appointed Assistant Minister to the Minister of Public Administration competent for e-Croatia Directorate, Darko Parić, as Digital Champion. A meeting was held with representatives of the Directorate General for Communications Networks, Contents and Technology, agreeing to hold the conference 'Digital Agenda for Europe - Going Local' in May 2013.

The realisation of projects launched by the Ministry of Environmental and Nature Protection "Development of National Information System for Environmental Protection Control" and "Procurement of Equipment for Environmental Protection Control" (IPA 2009) is also underway, aiming to improve the efficiency of public administration, i.e. the system of environmental protection control. In addition, these projects are aimed at preserving the existing biodiversity in the Republic of Croatia and improving data exchange for more efficient implementation of Natura 2000 protected areas.

The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports has increased the number of projects relating to the use of IT for the purpose of increasing the quality and efficiency of its services:

- *e-Matica*:

All schools in the country are provided access to *e-Matica* and are obligated to keep full records in *e-Matica*, thus creating a central database containing final grades and certificates of students, data on their achievements in competitions, administrative data of institutions and data on their employees.

All institutions have access to data they have entered into the database and the possibility of generating reports.

The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports has a continuous overview of all data in the database, and the possibility of processing data for statistical purposes. This has provided great assistance in the control of the education process in schools and the planning of these processes. Final grades, achievements in competitions and other data from *e-Matica* are transferred to the system for *e-Upisi* (e-enrolment) in order to score student results for the purpose of enrolment in secondary schools.

Final grades and other data are transferred from *e-Matica* into the NISpVU (National Information System of Application to Higher Education Institutions) in order to score student results for the purpose of enrolment in higher education institutions.

E-Matica is linked to other systems within the competence of the City of Zagreb (GUOS), the Croatian Employment Service, Tax Administration (OIB system), CARNet (e-Dnevnik/e-Class Register), etc.

Plans are in place to link *e-Matica* with the Croatian Pension Insurance Institute, Zagreb Municipal Transit System and the central salary calculation system. *E-Matica* is continuously upgraded in accordance with the needs of the Ministry and end users in schools, aiming to ensure comprehensive records and simplify the operation of the application.

- *e-Dnevnik (e-Class Register):*

This is an electronic version of the class register, a service provided to schools by CARNet. The system has been created on the basis of the paper version of the class register, using the advantages provided by information technology, such as automated notifications, alarms and possibilities of statistical data processing.

Electronic keeping of data previously kept in paper versions of class registers enables continued data access to school staff, parents and students.

Numerous reports enable schools to continuously monitor the flow of the education process. Students have constant and protected access to their grades, absence records, and test schedules. It requires only Internet access.

Parents are informed of the possible absence of their child from school on a daily basis via an automated e-mail.

The communication between *e-Dnevnik* and *e-Matica* is two-way. *e-Dnevnik* relies on *e-Matica* for the schedule of students per class, list of teaching staff and subjects (at the beginning of the year). *e-Dnevnik* sends data on final grades to *e-Matica* (at the end of the school year).

Plans are in place to: adjust the application to be used in all types of educational institutions, use the service of *e-Dnevnik* in as many schools as possible (200 new

schools in the school year 2013/2014), enable use of the system is as simple as possible for teaching staff, provide all necessary functionalities, and continually upgrade the system in line with the requirements of end users in schools, within the framework of existing regulations.

- *e-Upisi:*

E-Upisi is a common denominator in relation to the processing of applications and enrolment in secondary schools and applying for state graduation exam, and a study programmes at higher education institutions. This is carried out via two information systems: the National Information System of Application to Secondary Schools (NISpuSŠ) and the National Information System of Application to Higher Education Institutions (NISpVU).

Via the NISpuSŠ, students can apply for up to ten educational programs at a maximum of five schools, which is more than provided in previous years. Students are provided access to information on educational programmes, scoring per programme, quotas and enrolment requirements during the entire procedure. Personal data of candidates, grades and achievements in competitions and other elements scored are transferred to the NISpuSŠ from *e-Matica*. Candidates are able to view the situation on the list of applicants until the end of the process. The system is monitored by several administrative interfaces for other stakeholders in the enrolment procedure – primary and secondary schools, state administration offices, county administration offices and the Ministry.

NISpVU is the central information-administration service that makes it easier for candidates interested in applying for the state graduation exam and continuing their education at higher levels of education to apply to and enrol in higher education institutions. The system covers the entire process from the expression of interest for selected study programmes, through application for state graduation exams and overview of results, and the overview of results by selected study programmes to the entitlement to enrol with a higher education institution. Candidates are provided with a speedy and direct overview of results in the state graduation exam (review of scanned exam forms and assessment documents), with a detailed score card for each study programme applied for in line with the conditions set by each higher education institution and broken down by each evaluation component, as well as a review of their place on the list of candidates for each of the selected study programmes from the very beginning of the process.

The National Centre for External Evaluation of Education and the Ministry are provided with the possibility of reviewing all segments of the procedure at all times, and are provided the possibility of generating reports. Secondary schools and higher education institutions are provided the same.

- *E-škole (e-schools):*

The objective of the project carried out by the Croatian Academic and Research Network, in co-operation with the Ministry, is the comprehensive infomatisation of schools in the territory of the Republic of Croatia, aiming to contribute to the preparedness of students for the labour market or further education by

supporting schools in promoting digital maturity. Digital maturity is the capability of a school and the entire educational system to accept and utilise the ICT potential in supporting teaching and operating processes at schools and in the school system. This project is aimed at developing several important components including providing schools with high-speed and ultra high-speed Internet access and local networks, developing e-services for operating and teaching processes, applying ICT in class, digitalisation of education content, procurement of the necessary ICT equipment for schools and teachers and education of and support to all participants involved in the school informatisation process.

- *State Graduation Exam and Enrolment in Higher Education Institutions:* Information on study programmes, score charts per programme and terms and conditions of enrolment are made available to interested candidates during the entire process.

Candidates are given the opportunity to apply for ten different study programmes at one time, which is much more than in the years prior to electronic applications and the state graduation exam.

Candidates are expected to apply for study programmes in the order of interest, placing the programme that they are most interested in at the top of their preference list, and then list the others under the same criteria, which clearly indicates the preferences of each candidate.

All segments of scoring, which lead to the final score and ranking of the candidate, are transparent and clearly visible: the results of the state graduation exam make up an important part in the score chart and are also transparently registered in the system; the final grades and other relevant data are taken from *e-Matica*.

The candidates can continuously monitor their ranking, their score, and the scores of other candidates on the lists.

Secondary schools have an overview of the applications of their former students and are provided with information on their aptitudes and intentions, and finally on the programmes they have enrolled in.

Higher education institutions have an overview of the scores of candidates that have applied for their study programmes and information on the ranking of their institution on the priority lists of individual candidates.

The system provides candidates with the right to enrol in the study program which is highest on their priority list and for which they meet the terms and conditions, within the enrolment quotas.

The National Centre for External Evaluation of Education and the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports are provided with insight into all segments of the

process during the entire enrolment period and have the possibility of generating reports.

The Croatian Health Insurance Fund carried out several projects relating to the use of information technologies for the purpose of raising work efficiency (especially in the context of exchanging electronic data). In the last nine months the Fund introduced automated applications for citizens for health insurance with data electronically obtained from the Croatian Pension Insurance Institute for new users in the system (pensioners, pensioners who inherited their pension and their family members). The Pension Insurance Institute transfers data on persons who have acquired the right to insurance to the Croatian Health Insurance Fund on a daily basis, where the applications of pension beneficiaries and their family members for health insurance are processed automatically. It is no longer necessary to come in person to the counter and bring documents such as birth certificates, decisions, marriage licences, etc. Since October 2009, some 29 000 such applications have been received.

After the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the EU, the Croatian Health Insurance Fund agreed with the Croatian Pension Insurance Institute regarding automatic applications for all workers going abroad (based on the A1 form) in the same way as for pensioners. The entities bearing the cost (Croatian companies) are no longer required to register employees to be sent for work abroad at the counter of an office of the Croatian Health Insurance Fund. The data are transferred from the Croatian Pension Insurance Institute in the same manner as in case of pensioners.

As for foreign citizens who are entitled to health insurance, the Ministry of Interior and the Croatian Health Insurance Fund have agreed on electronic data exchange, which no longer makes it necessary for foreign citizens to come in person to the offices of the Croatian Health Insurance Fund.

The entitlement of Croatian Homeland War Veterans, Croatian Homeland War Veterans who have suffered bodily injuries of 30% or greater, family members of killed, imprisoned or missing Croatian Homeland War Veterans who are beneficiaries of, and while they are beneficiaries of, family disability benefits to the HB insurance card (supplemental health insurance policy without additional payments) has in the last two years been regulated by electronic data exchange between the Ministry of War Veterans and the Croatian Health Insurance Fund. Thus far some 90,000 cards have been issued.

A web application (<http://www.cezih.hr/EhicRequest/request.html>) for submitting applications for European Health Insurance Cards (EHIC) via the Internet was activated on 1 July 2013 by simply entering the OIB or MBO identification numbers, which immediately sends a notification on the time and venue where the card can be collected.

As a result of the EU Twinning Project IPA HR 07 IB-OT-01 "*Health and Safety at Work*" completed on 3 July 2012, an agreement was signed on the exchange of data in the area of health protection and safety at work. The said agreement, entered into between the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour and Pension System, State Inspectorate, Croatian Institute for Health Protection and Safety at Work and the Croatian Health Insurance Fund established the need for co-operation between the said bodies and institutions and exchange of data and information in the area of health protection and safety at work,

and for creating the conditions for uninterrupted communication with the central database. The said bodies and institutions have agreed to exchange data, the collection, processing, analysis and publication of which are mandated to them pursuant to the regulations of the Republic of Croatia, thereby complying with special regulations on the protection of personal data. Based on this agreement, the Croatian Health Insurance Fund is obligated to enable each party to the agreement unobstructed access to the database (Data Collector).

The project to rationalise counter operations, including those connected with the exercise of certain rights arising from compulsory health insurance via automatic data exchange between the Croatian Health Insurance Fund and individual government bodies and institutions, thus minimising the number of persons required to exercise certain rights in person at counters of the Fund's offices. The first results were achieved in the first half of 2013. In the area of realising rights and concluding Supplemental Health Insurance Policies, data as regards the income brackets are shared with the Tax Administration and the Croatian Pension Insurance Institute.

4. Citizen and civil society participation

In the area of citizen and civil society participation, two measures and nine implementing activities have been envisaged.

MEASURE 8. SETTING UP A SYSTEM OF PARTICIPATORY DRAFTING AND MONITORING OF STATE AND LOCAL BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION

Implementing activity 8.1

Support open public discussions and consultations with citizens and civil society organisations in order to identify priorities in budget funds allocation.

Implementing Body: The Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs

Start of Implementation Deadline: January 2013

The activity is continuous and is being implemented.

In accordance with the conclusions of the Interdepartmental committee for the coordination of policies for funding projects and programmes implemented by NGOs financed from the State Budget, the Office for Cooperation with NGOs of the Government of the Republic of Croatia carried out public consultation on the draft plan of tenders, public invitations and other programmes for financing projects and programmes of civil society organisations from the State Budget in 2013, and on the draft proposal for the alignment of formal conditions for applying to tenders for financing projects and programmes of NGOs from public sources. The consultation has been carried out with the objective of obtaining feedback whether the proposed priority areas have managed to cover the existing needs in the field and for the purpose of collecting proposals for efficient alignment of the minimum formal conditions for application and the required tender documentation. In addition, one of the objectives to be achieved was to discuss

the adequacy of previous procedures of tender preparation and implementation in order to enable better monitoring of the results and the effects of financed projects and programmes in line with key strategic documents and identified needs.

As part of the consultation, two public discussions were held, in addition to a public Internet consultation, lasting from 14 to 29 November 2012.

In line with the applications to the award competition for promoting participatory democracy and social development in the local community in the program area "*Together for better*", the National Foundation for Civil Society Development approved funds for 12 projects of promoting participatory democracy in 12 towns in the Republic of Croatia with a population of up to 30,000 citizens. The implementation of 12 projects of promoting participatory democracy and social development started in January 2013 and therefore the results of their implementation are not yet visible. The projects for which funds were awarded were developed in co-operation with citizens, i.e. the participating towns were given expert support through a guided process in order to include citizens in establishing the one relevant priority upon which the proposal of social development proposal was prepared and qualified for co-financing from the National Foundation. In the same manner, the National Foundation opened a new "*Together for better*" award procedure in June 2013, with the implementation of the approved support planned for 2014 for five development projects.

In addition, there are examples of participatory inclusion of citizens in the processes of defining priorities in the budget funds allocation at the local level, such as in the City of Rijeka. However, the challenge to carry out wider scale public discussions and consultations in this area remains and it will be one of the issues addressed in the next Action Plan.

Implementing activity 8.2

Enable participation of public employees, scientists, experts and other persons in the discussions about key budgetary documents in sessions of Croatian Parliament working bodies.

Implementing Body: Croatian Parliament

Start of Implementation Deadline: June 2012

The activity has been implemented.

The Rules of Procedure of the Croatian Parliament (OG 81/13) and Ordinance on the Public Work of the Croatian Parliament and its Working (OG 66/05) provide for the public openness of the Croatian Parliament and its working bodies. Transparency and public openness of its working bodies is ensured in several ways. On the official website of the Croatian Parliament (www.sabor.hr), the meetings of relevant working bodies are published in advance so that the interested public has the opportunity to register for participation in these meetings.

The Rules of Procedure of the Croatian Parliament prescribe that public employees, scientists and experts may be appointed to the working bodies of the Croatian Parliament with all membership rights, except for the right of decision-making. Decisions on the appointment of public employees, scientists and experts to working

bodies of the Croatian Parliament were adopted on its 6th session on 14 December 2012. The Rules of Procedure also stipulate that a working body of the Croatian Parliament may invite public employees, scientists, experts and other persons to its sessions for the purpose of hearing their opinion on the issues discussed at the relevant session. Representatives of public employees, scientists and experts are invited to the meetings of parliamentary committees depending on the issues discussed.

Implementing activity 8.3

Support cooperation programmes between local and regional self-government units and civil society organisations in strengthening budget transparency and citizen participation in planning and monitoring local budget implementation.

Implementing Body: The Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs

Start of Implementation Deadline: January 2013

The activity is continuous and is being implemented.

Under Component IV IPA Programme, the grant scheme “*Strengthening the regional and local structures to support the development of civil society*” was published on 1 February 2013. The total worth of the project is EUR 600,000.00, and the general objective is to contribute to balanced regional development of civil society organisations in the Republic of Croatia. Some of the results expected from the project are tied to the development of innovative mechanisms for participation of citizens in the adoption and monitoring of the implementation of local policies and thus local budgets. The National Foundation for Civil Society Development and the Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Cooperation with NGOs, in cooperation with regional support centres, organised informative workshops for possible future applicants to the grant scheme “*Strengthening the regional and local structures to support the development of civil society*”. The workshops were held in February in Rijeka, Varaždin, Split, Osijek and Zagreb:

<http://www.uzuvrh.hr/vijest.aspx?pageID=1&newsID=2200>,

http://zaklada.civilnodrustvo.hr/upload/File/hr/programi_eu/ipa/vijesti/2013/poziv_info_radionice_02.pdf.

The National Foundation for Civil Society Development financed a survey entitled “Do citizens have anything to say? Participation of civil society organisations in decision-making at the local level” that was carried by the organisation ODRAZ. The publication was published on that organisation’s website in December 2012:

<http://www.odraz.hr/media/131001/imaju-li-gradani-sto-za-reci-130x200-web.pdf>

Implementing activity 8.4

Conduct a public discussion about the financial statements of all companies of special state interest

Implementing Body: The Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs

Implementation Deadline: October 2012, October 2013

Activity implementation is underway.

On 13 July 2012, the Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Cooperation with NGOs organised, in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, GONG, TIH and experts from the Ministry of Finance and the Institute for Public Finances, a public discussion at the Croatian Parliament on transparency and responsibility in the operation of companies of special state interest. The discussion ended with conclusions and recommendations which have been imbedded into the Action Plan under the Anti-Corruption Strategy.

As a result of the discussion, the Action Plan under the Anti-Corruption strategy included measures that, among other things, relate to improved grant and sponsorship transparency, as well as increased activity of the Ministry of Interior in the aspect of intensifying criminal investigations of acts of corruption perpetrated by officials and responsible persons in companies in majority state ownership. In addition, the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted a Report on the implementation of the Anti-corruption programme for companies in majority state ownership for the period 2010–2012. This report includes a series of conclusions and recommendations on future activities to be undertaken. The Ministry of Justice conducted a survey on the transparency of local and regional government units based on which it obtained data on all companies and public institutions owned by municipalities, towns and counties. This survey also ended in conclusions and recommendations that will be implemented in the upcoming period. The mentioned report and the survey results are available on the following website: www.antikorupcija.hr.

A similar discussion will be organised again in October 2013.

MEASURE 9. IMPROVING THE PRACTICE OF CONSULTING THE INTERESTED PUBLIC IN PROCEDURES OF ADOPTING NEW LAWS, OTHER REGULATIONS AND ACTS

Implementing activity 9.1

Introduce amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Croatian Government which stipulate the obligation of referring the proposals of draft regulations to the process of consultations (in line with the Code of Practice on Consultation) and require submitting the report on conducted consultations together with draft laws and other regulations

Implementing Body: Government of the Republic of Croatia, upon the proposal by the Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs

Start of Implementation Deadline: September 2012

The activity has been fully implemented.

This activity has been completed by amending the Rules of Procedure of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (OG 121/12). Amendments to the Rules of Procedure in Article 30, paragraph 4 stipulate the obligation that when referring proposals of draft regulations to the Government procedure, draft proposals of laws, other regulations and acts have to be accompanied by a report on conducted consultations with the interested public if such consultations have been conducted, in accordance with a special

regulation, i.e. the Code of Practice on Consultation with the interest public in procedures of adopting laws, other regulations and acts.

As visible from the description of Implementing activity 9.4, progress in the number of conducted consultations was already achieved in 2012, and the public became more interested in participating in the process of shaping public policies. Given that the Rules of Procedure of the Croatian Government were amended in late 2012, further positive developments as regards the process of consultations are expected in 2013.

Implementing activity 9.2

Set up a standardized Internet system for consulting the public in the procedure of adopting new laws, other regulations and acts

Implementing Body: Ministry of Public Administration

Implementation Deadline: September 2012

Activity implementation is underway.

The Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Cooperation with NGOs devoted a special page on its website to consultations with the interested public, where information on all opened and closed consultations of relevant government bodies is regularly published.

A separate portal dedicated to consultations is expected to be set up by the Ministry of Public Administration in the upcoming period, providing for ongoing communication between public administration bodies and the interested public as regards all regulations in the process of adoption. The portal will be a part of the *gov.hr* system, i.e. of the central government portal which should, for the most part, be set up by the end of 2013.

Implementing activity 9.3

Conduct regular training for consultation coordinators and other civil servants so that they are proficient in using the Code of Practice efficiently.

Implementing Body: The Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs

Start of Implementation Deadline: June 2012

Activity implementation is underway.

In the first half of 2012, the Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Cooperation with NGOs carried out the IPA 2009 technical assistance project "*Strengthening the Capacity of the Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs for Building Effective Partnership with Civil Society Organizations in the Fight against Corruption*". The objective of the project was to improve co-operation between government bodies and civil society organisations in combating corruption. The main activities included the design of a comprehensive education and training programme for consultation co-ordinators appointed in state administration bodies and offices of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, as well as holding of several public discussions and preparation and printing of a comprehensive consultation manual.

The education and training programme for consultation co-ordinators was implemented via three modules and based on the modules developed, the Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Cooperation with NGOs designed a one-day education programme on carrying out efficient consultations with the interested public in the procedure of adopting laws, other regulations and acts.

The said programme was included in the programme of the National School for Public Administration, where it was presented for the first time to 20 representatives of state administration bodies and offices of the Government of the Republic of Croatia on 18 February 2013. Due to the large interest in the programme, a second workshop was held on 8 March 2013 and was attended by some additional 20 government officials. The next workshop is planned for early October 2013.

Implementing activity 9.4

Prepare annual reports on the efficient implementation of the Code of Practice on Consultation with the Interested Public in procedures of adopting new laws, other regulations and acts

Implementing Body: The Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs

Deadline: February 2013

The activity has been implemented.

The Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Cooperation with NGOs prepared a report on the implementation of the Code of Practice on Consultations with the Interested Public in procedures of adopting laws, other regulations and acts in 2012 and published it in mid-April 2013. The preparation of the Report is a contribution to the establishment of a system of regular monitoring of public consultation standards, as an important factor in good management and participatory development of public policies in Croatia.

The report was prepared in co-operation with the competent ministries and government offices and it shows that substantial progress has been achieved in terms of the number of conducted consultations, but also in terms of the interest of the representatives of the interested public for participation in the procedures of adoption of laws, other regulations and acts. According to the data received, in 2012 state administration bodies and government offices carried out consultation procedures with the interested public in connection with a total of 144 laws, other regulations and acts. This represents a substantial increase as compared to 2011, when 48 consultations were carried out. In addition, 4786 written proposals were received in 2012, i.e. responses of the interested public to draft proposals of laws, other regulations and acts. This was a substantial increase relative to the 173 written comments received in 2011.

It is estimated that the progress achieved in the number of conducted consultations, and also in the increased interest of the public for participation in the processes of shaping public policies, is, among other things, a result of the substantial investment in systematic promotion of the Code of Practice on Consultation by civil society organisations and the Government of the Republic of Croatia (especially via social networks) and in systematic education and training of competent government officials as regards the implementation of the Code.

The Report on the implementation of the Code of Practice on Consultation is published on the website of the Office for Cooperation with NGOs:

<http://www.uzuvrh.hr/vijest.aspx?pageID=1&newsID=2341>.

The website of the Office for Cooperation with NGOs features a special page devoted to consultations with the interested public which provides an overview of opened and closed consultations: <http://www.uzuvrh.hr/savjetovanja.aspx?pageID=221>.

A separate portal dedicated to consultations is expected to be set up by the Ministry of Public Administration in the upcoming period, which will provide for ongoing communication between public administration bodies and the interested public on all regulations in the process of adoption. The portal will be a part of the *gov.hr* system, i.e. of the central government portal which should, for the most part, be set up by the end of 2013.

Implementing activity 9.5

Include the representatives of public employees, scientists, and experts in the work of the Croatian Parliament working bodies

Implementing Body: Croatian Parliament

Deadline: June 2012

The activity has been implemented.

The Rules of Procedure of the Croatian Parliament (OG 81/13) and Ordinance on the Public Work of the Croatian Parliament and its Working Bodies (OG 66/05) provide for the public openness of the Croatian Parliament and its working bodies. The transparency and openness to the public of its working bodies is ensured in several ways.

The meetings of relevant working bodies are published in advance on the official website of the Croatian Parliament (www.sabor.hr), so that the interested public has the opportunity to register for participation in these meetings.

The Rules of Procedure of the Croatian Parliament proscribe that public employees, scientists and experts may be appointed to working bodies of the Croatian Parliament with all membership rights, except for the right of decision-making. Decisions on the appointment of public employees, scientists and experts to working bodies of the Croatian Parliament were adopted at its 6th session on 14 December 2012. The Rules of Procedure also stipulate that a working body of the Croatian Parliament may invite public employees, scientists, experts and other persons to its sessions for the purpose of hearing their opinion on the issues discussed at the relevant session. The representatives of public employees, scientists and experts are invited to the meetings of parliamentary committees depending on the issues discussed.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES RELATED TO CITIZENS AND CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION

The ministries carry out regular consultations with the interested public in procedures of adopting laws, other regulations and acts and publish the relevant information on their official websites. In addition to online consultations, individual ministries have also organised round table and public discussions in connection with certain laws, other regulations and acts. The representatives of civil society organisations have been included in the work of several working groups involved in the preparation of individual legislative proposals and proposals of other regulations and acts.

For the purpose of informing the largest possible number of potential participants, the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Crafts also shares information on consultations by means of social network profiles.

The Ministry of Labour and Pension System has set up a special website *rasprava.mrms.hr* (with a link from the official website of the Ministry) where it publishes draft proposals of laws, other regulations and acts, aiming to carry out prior public discussions and consultations with the interested public.

The Ministry of Economy carries out consultations on draft proposals of regulations in the area of public procurement and publishes them on the website of the Ministry and the website *javnabava.hr*.

As part of the project “Patient Associations – Our Partner”, the Minister of Health and his co-workers hold weekly meetings with representatives of patient associations in order to remove barriers in exercising patient rights and to improve the quality of health care. A new address has been created under pitajtenas@miz.hr to which citizens can address their queries, requests, proposals, etc. of which approximately 700 are received each month. The White Telephone project is ongoing. This is a toll-free telephone line where citizens can obtain information on all aspects of health care system operation. Some 900 calls are received each month.

The Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs held consultations with representatives of civil society organisations in June 2012. The topic was international development co-operation in the context of informing the general public on the changed role of the Republic of Croatia as a donor country, with special emphasis on alignment the national priorities of international development co-operation. This served as a foundation for the adoption of the Implementing Programme of the National Strategy of Development Cooperation for 2012 and marked the channelling of development assistance to new areas in Croatia’s foreign policy interest. In October 2012, a workshop was held in the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs on EU development co-operation policy, with a special focus on national territorial and thematic priorities. Just before the publication of the tender for support to the NGO that co-coordinated the platform of civil society organisations, consultations were held with a small circle of representatives of interested organisations as regards adequate institutional framework for providing support to the development of civil society in the area of international development co-operation.

The Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Interior, together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Croatian Law Centre, implemented the project “*Strengthening of the Croatian Civil Society in the Area of Migration and Asylum as*

Preparation for Accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union", ensuring a special kind of co-operation between the public and the civil sector and providing direct insight for the civil society into the procedures implemented by police officers in the area of illegal migration and asylum.

In 2012, the Ministry of Veterans' Affairs started organising public debates dedicated to persons who went missing in Croatia's Homeland War, while the Directorate for the Imprisoned and Missing of the Ministry of Veterans Affairs co-operates closely (by holding joint meetings) with civil society organisations from Croatia and the region in order to improve the search for missing persons.

The Office for Combating Drug Abuse has a toll-free telephone line called *Anti Drug Line* (0800-8008) that citizens can call anonymously and obtain information relating to issues of drug abuse and available treatment.

IV. Conclusions, reaffirming the commitment to participate in the Open Government Partnership, future steps

Since the implementation of the Action Plan is, for the most part, unfolding as planned and the groundwork has been laid for the implementation of a large number of envisaged implementing activities that are yet to be completed, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Open Government Partnership initiative has been largely successful in its first year.

Some important results have been achieved, especially in the area of consultations with the interested public and right of access to information, although certain challenges still remain to be tackled in the forthcoming period. This goes primarily for activities in the area of fiscal transparency and activities in relation to the use of information technology where results envisaged by the Action Plan are yet to be achieved.

However, the Government of the Republic of Croatia, i.e. its individual ministries and other government bodies, have carried out a significant number of other activities contributing to the achievement of objectives set by the Action Plan, reaffirming their commitment to apply the principles and standards agreed upon when joining the *Open Government Partnership* initiative.

Given the numerous benefits that the implementation of open government standards brings to citizens, primarily through improvement of the provision of public services, easier access to state administration bodies and ultimately increased confidence of the public as key factors of sustainable economic and social development, while at the same time respecting the need for continued exchange and mutual support among the participants in this global initiative, the Government of the Republic of Croatia is committed to press ahead with the implementation of the *Open Government Partnership* initiative in the Republic of Croatia. With this end in view, the work on the creation of a new Action Plan, which will take into account experiences and lessons learned thus far and which will be developed in cooperation with a wide circle of stakeholders from different sectors, will commence by the end of 2013.