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# Name of the Share-PSI workshop

# Uses of Open Data Within Government for Innovation and Efficiency

*Version 1 (May 8th, 2015)*

# Title of the Best Practice:

***Supervizor - an indispensable Open Government application***

***(Transparency of Public Spending)***

# Outline of the best practice

Supervizor is an online application that provides information to users on business transactions of the public sector bodies. **The application is an example of an open government application, providing the transparency of public spending by acquiring and integrating data from different registers and databases.** By now Supervizor contains over 50 million financial transactions from both government and local agencies to government contractors from 2003 to 2015.These transactions are matched with company records from the Business Register including director lists and corporate leadership. The application is managed by the Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (CPC) and has won the UN Public Service Award in 2013, an important recognition of excellence in public service. The data about financial transactions from Supervizor has also been used by Slovenian Open Data portal run by the Ministry of the Public Administration.

# Management summary

## Challenge

Transparency of financial flows from public to private sector increases the level of responsibilities of public office holders for effective and efficient use of public finance, encourages debate on adopted and planned investments and projects as well as decreases risks for illicit management, abuse of functions and limits systemic corruption. The proactive transparency has been regarded as one of the most efficient tools for tackling systemic corruption. The Commission for the Prevention of Corruption of the Republic of Slovenia thus wanted to develop a web application which collects relevant data from various sources (Ministry of Finance, Public Payments Authority, etc.) in a more user-friendly form and represents an important step towards more transparent state operations. It needs to be mentioned that apart from re-use legislation Slovenia has a very pro-transparent Access to Public Information legislation.

## Solution

Supervizor reveals that in average 4.7 billion EUR is used for goods and services by the public sector each year and indicates contracting parties, all recipients of funds, related legal entities, date and amount of transactions and also purposes of money transfers (for all the services and goods payments above2.000 EUR). It also enables visualization of data using graphs as well as printouts for specified periods of timeor/and other criteria. The application also reveals the ownership and the management structure of the Slovenian companies and some data from their annual reports (PSI from the Slovenian Business Register). It enables insight in financial flows among the public and private sector, not only to the public and media, but – and this is an important added value – also to regulatory and supervisory bodies.[[1]](#footnote-1) Since financial transactions and financial flow analyses are a vital part of the evidence-gathering process when investigating economic crime, public finance crime and corruption, the availability of a tool, where information on business transactions of public sector bodies as well as other information regarding recipients of public funds is in one place, is extremely welcome. The data is updated daily.

The Supervizor is a project, conceptually designed and prepared by the Commission for the Prevention of Corruption in cooperation with an independent expert and assistance of other bodies: the Ministry of Public Administration, the Ministry of Finance, Public Payments Administration (PPA), the Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Public Legal Records and Related Services in charge of the Slovenian Business Register (AJPES).

The PPA provides payment services for direct and indirect users of central and local government budgets. It streamlines and records the flows of public finance within the single treasury system. This means that all the data about financial transactions from public sector bodies to private companies are recorded in one central database. For the purpose of Supervizor PPA provides the *data to CPC on all payments* among the public sector bodies and public sector payments to private companies from 1 January 2003 onwards.

The AJPES keeps records on business entities in Slovenia and manages t*he Slovenian Business Register* as a central public database of all business entities, their subsidiaries and other organizational segments located in Slovenia which perform profitable or non-profitable activities.

*Database of public procurements* in Slovenia is the third main source of data. It is maintained by the public company Official Gazette and Ministry of Finance and contains information about all public procurements and small value public procurements including companies which received public procurement and the financial value of certain business.

***The process of establishing the application – removing data that is not generally accessible***

Data were **imported into the internal CPC’s database management system (DBMS)**and **linked**. Records about business entities, annual reports and information about public procurements have been made generally publicly available excluding the data about financial transactions, which have not been made entirely public as the database contained personal and classified data. Therefore these data were requested by the CPC on the basis of Article 16 of the Integrity and Corruption Prevention Act, which gives the CPC specific rights for acquisition of data and documents. The CPC developed algorithms for detecting and eliminating those data in order to be able to publish the remaining data as the generally accessible data on the internet. The main motive was to perform proactive approach towards transparency of public finances and being able to publish it on the internet, where anyone can see it and be a supervisor of public spending.

**The removed data – publicly non accessible** - were mainly transactions related to physical persons (salaries, expenses related to salaries, etc.), transactions to accounts of health insurance companies containing personal data, transactions from deposit account of the Customs Administration of the Republic of Slovenia, transactions to Central Securities Clearing Corporation for the purchase of debt securities and payments of PPA for the repayment of debts, transactions to intelligence and security services, transactions to banks, returns of taxes, etc. While performing analysis the CPC received some additional data aboutfinancial transactions (statistical code of transaction and SEPA code of the transaction purpose). These data also helped the CPC to remove transactions containing personal and classified information.

As a final step the web application has been made, the aim of which is **to visualize the data** about public expenditures and ownership and management structure of the Slovenian companies in a simple and understandable way. The application has simple graphical user interface that allows searching information about public expenditures and companies/recipients of public funds. The web application has been written in cooperation with an independent expert and is using open source technologies (PostgreSQL DBMS, Debian Linux operating system, Nginx web server and free JavaScript libraries for data visualization). Afterwards the web application using the final version of the database has been put on a public web server. By using open source technologies the costs of software has been reduced (free operating system, DBMS and web server). Selected technologies have been proven to have high performance while carrying out a lot of database transactions and web requests from the end users. Usage of non-relational DBMS and distributed processing data solutions still need to be considered as the data grows.

Before the main break at the SHARE-PSI workshop on the Samos island the Information Commissioner has been asked for the opinion related to the protection of personal data in an application. The CPC followed the Information Commissioner’s recommendations and performed some additional adjustments. After that the Supervizor has been published on the internet (August 23, 2011).

In 2014 the data about transactions from Supervizor have been provided as Open Data in machine-readable format within the Slovenian Open Data portal (so called NIO portal).

The data contained within the files includes:

1. Data about monthly amount of the funding received by the specific budget userfor each respective year from 2003 on, with the current year in a separate file for each month.

2. Data about individual financial transactions of budget users

The data are in **CSVformat and Unicode (UTF-8) encoded.**

# Best Practice Identification

## Why is this a Best Practice? What's the impact of the Best Practice?

An application is an example of an open government application, providing the transparency of public spending by combining data from different data sources run by different public sector bodies. After the process of data acquisition and before the data are published, the personal data must be excluded. Thorough examination of data attributes and data values must be made not to include any personal data. The Supervizor visualizes the financial flows within the public sector and between the public and private sector in a user-friendly way. Finally, the data on financial transactions are also available as open data in the Slovenian open Data portal NIO.

## Link to the PSI Directive

* Data quality issues and solutions / Quality assurance, feedback channels and evaluation
* Dataset structures, formats, APIs / Structuring of information/data, formats, APIs

## Why is there a need for this Best Practice?

* Transparency
* Accountability
* Efficiency of the functioning of the public sector
* Open government

# What do you need for this Best Practice?

* Strategic plan for Public Sector Transparency
* Public databases containing data on financial transactions of the public sector bodies
* Pro-transparent Access to Public Information and Re-use legislation
* Political support
* Technical capabilities

# Applicability by other member states?

The solution is applicable to other member states. Some have already implemented similar solutions, such as Greece’s transparency project <https://diavgeia.gov.gr/>whichlists not only transactions, but also legal base, but lacks a visual representation of spending.

Since data are brought together from different sources, a clear policy on data ownership is crucial when resolving dubious or incorrect data.

# Contact info - record of the person to be contacted for additional information or advice.

Comission for Prevention of Corruption, Slovenia

Ministry of Public Administration, Slovenia ( Transparency, Integrity and Political system Service)

# Categories for use in section 3.2

* Policies and legislation (legal requirements, licenses etc..)/ Licensing of information/data and metadata
* Open Data platform(s) / Publication and deployment of information/data and metadata
* Dataset criteria and priorities and value and scope w.r.t. datasets
* Charging issues and proposals
* Techniques w.r.t. opening up of data / Technical requirements and tools
* Organisational structures and skills
* Dataset structures, formats, APIs / Structuring of information/data, formats, APIs
* Encouraging (commercial) re-use
* Persistence and maintenance of information/data and metadata
* Data quality issues and solutions / Quality assurance, feedback channels and evaluation
* Documentation of information/data, creation of metadata
* Selection of information/data to be published according to various criteria
* Data discoverability

1. For example, on the basis of Supervizor data from 2012 more than 100 cases of suspected violations of restriction on business were discovered by CPC (mostly on a local level). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)