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Teaching Guide

OPEN GOVERNMENT

Baccalaureate



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THE REASONS BEHIND THIS GUIDE

The term “**Open Government**” is increasingly used in the news, by the media, in political speeches, in academic work and on social media, etc. It is a new means of understanding the governance of the collective issues that involve the politicians in governments and parliaments, but also each and every person. In short, **Open Government** already forms part of our lives; and it is here to stay.

But, **can it be said that the concept of Open Government is something recent?** Yes and no. There are very old, publicly accessible laws and regulations. For example, the case of **Sweden** dates back to the **18th century**. At the same time, the concept of **Open Government's** return to popularity arrived with the unveiling of the **Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government** in 2009; the first measure adopted by the then-president of the United States of America, **Barack Obama**.

The **actions by governments and public administrations are in a constant transformation process** in present-day society, above all due to the speed and depth of the technological, social, cultural and economic changes. Thus, **governments and public administrations** world-over want to be increasingly more **transparent, accessible** and **sensitive** due to citizens' needs and demands. If they reach these objectives, they will head in the right direction towards **democratic governance**, greater **social cohesion** and **prosperous economic development**.

Open Government is based on transparency, accountability, participation and collaboration; the characteristics of which we are going to find out throughout this guide. This is a new way of understanding the government of societies. Thus, this guide came about as a tool of **Spain's III Open Government Plan** for the **Open Government Partnership**.

Therefore, the ultimate **aim** of this guide is to **bring the values and principles of Open Government closer** to Baccalaureate students and teachers and involve them in the process that is being carried out in many countries around the world. The intention is that among everyone, a more open and responsible State can be built, thanks to the existence of exacting citizens with regard to the actions of politicians, legislative assemblies, judges that give justice and people that work in the management of assets and public services.

On the other hand, it is focused on gaining **Social and Citizen Skills** that are essential in order to achieve for people to reach full personal development and for them to get involved in society with the responsibility and knowledge of the implications of participation in the democratic system in which we live.

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WHO MADE THIS GUIDE?



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THE AIMS OF THIS GUIDE

This guide has different objectives. They include the following:

- To promote **knowledge of the Administration** and the **Government**.
- **To generate civic awareness** based on the **principles of Open Government** that result in a benefit for society.
- To share the common **conceptual framework** regarding Open Government on an international level, but also opening the door to discussion.
- To promote the **exercise of democratic citizenship** and **transparency**.
- To know **good practice** as examples of implementation and the putting into practice of **Open Government** policies.

WHY NOW? THE TIME OF EDUCATION IN OPEN GOVERNMENT



The need for **Open Government** has become a priority for many countries around the world. Governments and public administrations in different contexts increasingly cooperate in order to give visibility to this concept and its different dimensions.

Created in 2011, the **Open Government Partnership** is a multilateral initiative that is now made up of more than 70 participating countries, including governments and civil society organisations (particularly NGOs that promote transparency and citizen participation). Spain has been a member of this partnership since it was created and it has recently incorporated 15 sub-national entities—meaning local councils and regions.

What Does It Mean to Be Part of the Open Government Partnership?

To be a member of the Open Government Partnership it is necessary to endorse an Open Government Declaration (which can be download and consulted via the link <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/declaraci-n-de-gobierno-abierto>)

Take a look at the Open Government Declaration and discuss with your classmates if you know any similar declarations made by other institutions. Together with your classmates, draw up an Open Government declaration adapted to the circumstances educational centre, group or association you belong to, or for young people in general. You can do so with a structure made up of various paragraphs which start with the following format: "We recognise that...", "We accept..." We defend..." and finally, the last paragraph should summarise the commitments: "And due to this we undertake to...". The aim is that, as a group, you draw up a series of objectives in the decalogue, focused on improving your close surroundings by means of boosting Open Government measures.

We suggest you check this link (http://transparencia.gob.es/transparencia/transparencia_Home/index/Gobierno-abierto/allPlanAccion.html) which will take you to **Spain's III Open Government Plan**, created in coordination with the **Open Government Partnership** (<https://www.opengovpartnership.org/>). As such you will be able to check how the document is structured, its objectives, its main characteristics and the fields in which it applies, which materialise in commitments (at present, the members of the Partnership have made more than 2,500 commitments regarding Open Government). If you go into the content of the document in more depth, you will be able to verify that one of the activities proposed among the commitments in **Spain's III Open Government Plan** is the creation of this guide. Open Government Training



Source of the image: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/>

BRINGING OPEN GOVERNMENT INTO THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

What can we do so that Baccalaureate students like you become aware of **Open Government**? Although at this stage in your education you have taken on some of the concepts related to the public sphere, we do not want to limit ourselves to just explaining what **Open Government** consists of, but rather we have to go a step further, adding more concepts such as Government and Public Administration, and carrying out practical actions that help you to understand it, imagining specific issues that affect you in day-to-day life or that affect the people closest to you (family, friends, neighbours, etc.)

How Can We Bring Open Government into the Classrooms?

In classrooms:

- Promoting **participation** in the electoral processes in educational centres.
- Providing **information** (number of students per school year, planning of classes and activities, etc.).
- Promoting collaborative **decision making** among students.
- Analysing the School Board's decision making processes and publishing their agreements.

In daily life:

- Creating a **civic awareness** between students based on the principles of Open Government.
- Bringing knowledge of the Government and the Administration closer to students.

And example of **Open Government** near to you would involve your educational centre providing information about student assessments. For example, why don't you ask a teacher to give you the number of students that have passed their final exams in the past five years? (Be careful! This information cannot include anyone's personal data, as that is prohibited by law). By having this information you can find out the percentage of students that pass the subject out of those enrolled on it, as well as the evolution over recent years. With this we are making the activity of people that work in public administrations, educational centres in this case, transparent.

Educational Center Council Elections

Have you ever thought about standing in the elections to be part of the Council in your centre? In this context many opportunities arise to work on the principles of **Open Government**, for example, by means of creating a group on a social platform which includes all the students in the centre and which enables collaboration when it comes to sharing information about all those issues that are dealt with in the Council: the classes, timetables and the regulations of the centre or any other issues of interest that you want to carry out. If you do not wish to put yourself forward for the School Council, do not worry, why don't suggest that someone else in your group does. They will definitely be successful!"

The previous example shows that if we want to expand **participation** and **citizen commitment**, -**Open Government** in other words-, we should start from the **educational field**. For this it is necessary to encourage **dialogue**, incorporate **new practice** and interact equally with others. **You can also make Open Government a reality!**

DEEPENING THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THE ADMINISTRATION

What is **Public Administration**? And **Government**? How can we differentiate them? This is a complex question, as they both represent executive power.

The **Spanish Government** is the **body that exists by mandate of the Spanish Constitution** and it has a **political** nature. The Government is made up of one person who acts as President and a variable number of people that are responsible for the ministries that are created in each period or term in office (normally four years). There are also governments in each Autonomous Community.

Public Administration is the group of **permanent bodies** that objectively serve the general interests and act in line with the principles of efficiency, hierarchy, decentralisation, deconcentration and coordination, always in line with the law. Just as the different levels of government are structured, there are also Public Administrations on a state, autonomous and local level. The Administration is **subject to the political direction** of the different governments and the regulations of the legislative power (Parliament).

This way, you should know that the **executive power**, which is that which applies and executes that laws passed by Parliament (legislative power), is the **result of both Government and Public Administration**. Here we will use the concept Open Government to jointly define these two branches of executive power.

In the image you will see shortly, you verify how the executive, legislative and judiciary power make up the entire "**Open State**", whose essence is derived from an open society. The notion of **Open State** brings together all of the State's powers in such a way that we can talk about an evolution of the application of Open Government in the Public Administration to the launching of an Open State, with Open Government policies throughout the public sphere. In this guide we will limit ourselves to the notion of Open Government (open governments and public administrations), although you should not lose sight of its connection with other State powers, or with society as a whole, as we all make up part of the latter- including you.





Image 1 Open Society

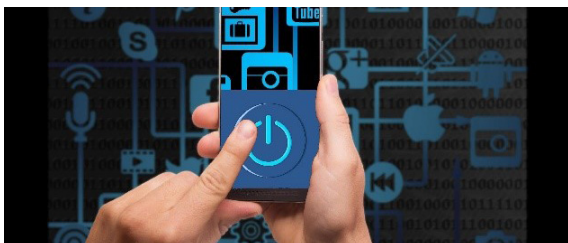
as well as the **recognition of citizens with a co-responsible role**. This means that **Open Government** is a way of governing societies in which there is more approachability between those representatives that are chosen in elections, people that work in public administrations and all other citizens. Furthermore, citizens; you, your classmates, family, friends, all of society, we need to get involved with the day-to-day of **Open Government** so that it becomes a reality.

Context and Evolution

The term **Open Government** appeared during last century as an idea that **aimed to reduce non-transparent areas of opacity** within the actions of governments and public administrations, involving citizens in the control and assessment of its working. Although time has passed since then, **these days were immersed in a very similar situation** to that of the initial years of **Open Government**. The times we live in bring about the idea of **Open Government** again for various reasons, which initially were not around, and that we can summarise in the following table.

OPEN GOVERNMENT: WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

Open Government is a **government model** for our societies which promotes **transparency** with regard to the actions of governments and public administrations, the **accountability** for their actions, citizen **participation** and **collaboration** with other agents. All of this is based on greater dialogue and balance between those that govern and all other citizens.



Below is a definition that you can discuss with your teacher and the rest of the class, in which the two aims of **Open Government** stand out: **improving decision making** and **increasing citizen involvement in public management**.

Open Government is a means of **socio-political interaction** based on **transparency, accountability, participation** and **collaboration**, which establishes a way of governing that is more open to dialogue, with a greater **balance between the power** of governments and those that are governed, and at the same time it acknowledges citizens with a co-responsible role. The intended aims are **improved decision making** and **citizen involvement** in public management, by means of an **increase in knowledge** and the launching of **public innovation**.

Source: Collaborative definition. Discussion on the NovoGob social media.

Changes that Promote Open Government

- A greater attitude towards the culture of transparency.
- The **problems regarding corruption and the bad use of public resources** is more evident and portrayed more often in the media.
- A **participative culture** has spread in an increasingly more connected world.
- The need for governments and public administrations to **collaborate** with more agents in order to solve complex social problems.
- **New means of communication** have appeared based on new technology.
- Development of a **network society on a global level**, above all, thanks to the use of social media and web 2.0 technology.

The most recent changes in our world have come about thanks to human beings' new ways of communicating. These new means of communication originate from the network of **internet** networks and the rapid development of the so-called "**network society**", thanks to the increasing use of **information and communication technologies**, as well as the use of **social media** and **web 2.0**.

For example, computers, mobiles and tablets are transforming our way of studying and working and they enable us to do more activities by means of these communication networks: participate in a discussion between friends or parents on WhatsApp, contribute to an idea to improve the town or city where I live by means of Twitter or obtaining information about what the political representative in my local council do via a transparency portal. And all of this can be done from anywhere using a mobile device connected to the internet!

The definition of **Open Government** highlights the need for a **greater balance between those that govern and those who are governed**,

Wikipedia. Have You Ever Searched on It? Have You Every Contributed to It?

Did you know that Wikipedia is the best encyclopaedia of knowledge that has existed in the history of humankind. On Wikipedia you can find more than 45 million articles written in almost 300 languages, put together collaboratively; in other words, through the efforts of volunteers in different places around the world. We encourage you to check out the definition of Open Government on [Wikipedia \(https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Portada\)](https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Portada) in order to see how it is structured in terms of format and content and for you to delve deeper into the topic.

On the other hand, did you know that you can also collaborate in the development of Wikipedia? You can create new articles or improve those that already exist. Check the article that describes the information of your municipality and on the "edit" tab on Wikipedia add the data that you think is missing, such as the number of primary and secondary schools. For this, create an "Education" section and describe the number of schools and their history. If you only know yours, do not worry, share the article and invite other students from other schools to collaborate. It is the best way of getting the best content!



Source of the image: https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gobierno_abierto

Due to all of this, the current resurgence of **Open Government** is inseparable in a social, economic, cultural or political context in which technology is increasingly more important and the means of communication have been transformed. In reality, if it were not for many of these new tools, we would not be able to talk of **Open Government** in the way we are doing so in this document.

Creating a Common Conceptual Framework

Likewise, **Open Government** is more than the use of technology within governments and public administrations. Many characteristics of an **Open Government** can be reached without using technology and they depend on our attitude as citizens who wish to promote democratic practice, but also our capacity to get involved in matters that are common to society as a whole and of understanding that we help political representatives with our opinions and actions about issues that affect our lives. In order to consider if governments and public administrations adhere to their actions being "open", they should comply with at least the conditions that appear in the grey box below.

A Government is Open If:

- It uses direct communication channels, which citizens already use, in order to actively listen and speed up responses.
- It publishes all the information generated or managed with public funds on the web portals in a format which facilitates them being reused (open data).
- It enables instruments for direct citizens participation, as well as for professionals and other organisations in public matters.
- It encourages the collaboration with other governments and public administrations, as well as civil society organisations (companies and NGOs) to solve social problems.

Political Benefits of Open Government

- Provides a greater quality of democracy.
- Enables for accountability.
- Promotes citizen participation and collaboration.
- Opens the doors and windows of public administration by means of implementing transparency measures.
- Returns citizens' trust in democratic institutions.
- Strengthens the Rule of Law.
- Improves the efficiency of the public administration.

Finally, the **economic benefits** affect society as a whole, given that **Open Government** contributes to generating an improvement of the **economy**.

Economic Benefits of Open Government

- Corruption, in any area of the public sector, is made far more complicated.
- Eliminates information asymmetries between those who govern and those who are governed, which contributes to bringing citizens closer to the public administration.
- Responsible conduct is promoted and incorrect attitudes and actions are limited.
- Legal security is increased and with that, investments are stimulated.

THE THREE PILLARS OF OPEN GOVERNMENT

As has been previously mentioned, Open Government is made up based on three essential pillars: transparency- including accountability within this-, participation and collaboration.

The **transparency** in governments and public administrations involves the **opening of all the issues regarding the Government** and Public Administration so that citizens access the information- in a reusable format- which facilitates their approachability.

Citizen **participation** can be defined as the process through which activities are developed whereby citizens are more involved in the design, management and implementation of public policies, with a citizen-centred attitude, expanding rights and generating obligations on the common good.

Collaboration is the process through which governments and public administrations **work together** with other public administrations and governments or with the private sector and civil society for the

definition of **public policies** and the improvement of public services. In other words, collaboration is understood as the creation of new meeting, dialogue and work spaces to encourage the co-creation of initiatives and the co-production of services.

Based on these three concepts and the issues derived from them, the context of Open Government will be developed throughout the following sections of this guide.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Definition

As previously mentioned, **transparency** and **accountability** are the starting point for our path towards **Open Government**. **Transparency** is the group of actions through which citizens have the **right to be aware of the information that governments and public administrations possess**. In other words, we can define the application of transparency as the group of **mechanisms through which governments and public administrations should publish information without anybody asking for this**, in addition to guaranteeing the **right to access** other information when somebody or an organisation so requests.

Accountability refers to the obligation of governments and public administrations to give explanations about their actions and to assume responsibility for the decisions they adopt. That is why **transparency and accountability** go hand-in-hand: in order to be able to demand that governments and public administrations are responsible for what they do and the decisions they adopt, we must be able to access all the information that they have available. These are two essential pillars so that we can head towards an **Open Government**.



The Glass Walls Metaphor

Therefore, transparency is the way in which citizens can discover what governments and public administrations do, as well as the acts and decisions that are made through public powers. This is known as having glass walls. Now imagine that your local council building had completely glass, transparent walls, and that everything that happened inside them was visible to everyone in your town and city. This would help us with the accountability pillar, as we would be able to demand responsibilities in cases of a bad use of public resources.

How to Find or Request Information

In Spain, since the year 2013 there has been a **Law on Transparency, Access to Public Information and Good Government**. This law considers both the active advertising by means of the administrations' web portals and the citizens' right to access.

What is **active advertising**? Active advertising responds to the obligation to publish certain information and data on the public administrations' transparency portals. This information should be periodically updated without a prior request being made, in such a way that any person can access this at any point with the confidence that the information is sufficient, relevant and up-to-date.

The **right to access information** is understood as the capacity that we have as citizens to request any information that we wish from governments and public administrations by means of the mechanisms provided by the **Law on Transparency**, with the limits that are outlined in the law itself.

One of the **tools** that administrations have available to adhere to the transparency are what are known as **transparency portals**. A transparency portal is a **web page** that contains all the information that the Administration makes available to citizens. On the transparency portals we can find, along with other information: the **budgets** of the public administrations, the **salaries** of senior staff, the **catalogues of assets**, contracts and **subsidies or agreements** with other public administrations or bodies, etc.

As an example of a **transparency portal**, we can mention the **Government of Spain's Transparency Portal**, which has more than half a million accessible registers. There are also transparency portals in each of the autonomous communities and cities and the local administrations.

The Government of Spain's Transparency Portal

If you access Spain's Transparency Portal via this link (http://transparencia.gob.es/transparencia/transparencia_Home/index.html) you will be able to verify the amount of data and information available. We challenge you to investigate on the Portal and check the salaries of Members of Government. If you prefer, you can also access the transparency portal of another institution and check this as a means of comparison. The salaries of the senior politicians should be available on the transparency portals of all public administrations, as such you should also be able to do this on the transparency portals in your Autonomous Community (you will be able to find them all at the end of this guide) or even on the portal of your own council. We also suggest you check the public calendar of the day for a senior member, information that should be available, and that you compare this with their activity on social media. Is their complete calendar available on the portal?

The image shows the homepage of the Government of Spain's Transparency Portal. At the top, there are social media icons for Twitter and YouTube, a 'Contactar' button, and a language dropdown set to 'Español'. The main header features the Spanish flag, the coat of arms, and the text 'portal de la transparencia ADMINISTRACIÓN GENERAL DEL ESTADO'. Below this is a navigation bar with five categories: 'Publicidad activa', 'Derecho de acceso', 'Gobierno abierto', 'Participación', and 'Más información'. A search bar with the placeholder 'Buscar...' and a magnifying glass icon is positioned below the navigation bar, with a link to 'Búsqueda avanzada >'. The main content area is divided into four columns, each with an image and a title: 'Encuentre la información' (with a hand holding a document), 'Solicite la información' (with a woman looking at a phone), 'Gobierno Abierto' (with the portal logo), and 'Participe' (with a person pointing at a screen). Below these are two sections: 'Publicidad activa' with sub-sections 'Organizada por materias' and 'Según la Ley de Transparencia', and 'Organizada por Ministerios'. To the right is a 'Novedades' section with two bullet points: 'Se reestructura la Presidencia del Gobierno' and 'Real Decreto 355/2018, de 6 de junio, por el que se reestructuran los departamentos ministeriales'. At the bottom, there is a section for 'Información y servicios de interés' and a 'Novedades >' link.

Source of the image: http://transparencia.gob.es/transparencia/transparencia_Home/index.html

The transparency portals are made up of various sections:

- **Institutional information**, where we can find information regarding the government of the institution. Enables accountability.
- **Regulatory information**, where the legislation of interest regarding the Administration that owns the transparency portal is gathered.
- **Economic information**, where information regarding budgets can be found.

How Can we Exercise our Right to Access

It may be that the specific information that interests us is not available on the transparency portal and we want to exercise our **right to access**. A very interesting example of this is the average university entrance exams grades gained in different centres in each Autonomous Community. It is not compulsory to publish this information. However, the situation has arisen in several Autonomous Communities in which this has been requested by means of the right to access and the autonomous administrations have made this public. On occasions this has even been permanently incorporated onto the transparency portals.



At the end of the guide you will find links to the transparency portals of all the Autonomous Communities. Choose yours and try and discover if the information we are talking about is available. If it is not, you can exercise your right to access the information by requesting it.

To exercise the **right to request information**, there are **forms on the transparency portal or other means of contact** through which we can request the information that we need. The Administration has a time frame of **30 days** to respond to us and provide the information we have requested.

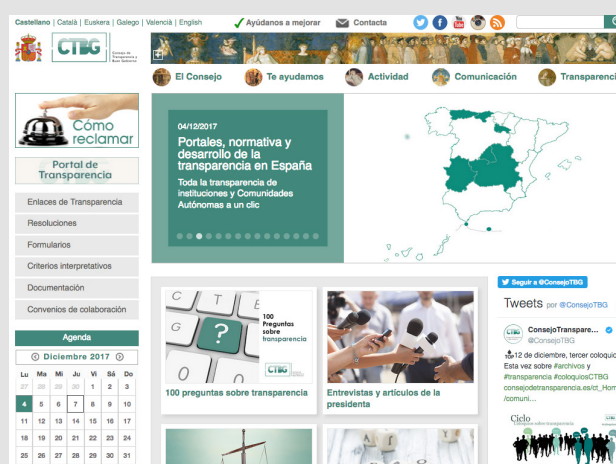
What if the Public Administration does not respond? If the Administration does not respond, we can **file a complaint with the relevant Transparency Councils**. The **Transparency Councils** are bodies that we find on an national and autonomous level in certain Auton-

omous Communities that endeavour for transparency in the public administrations in Spain and to resolve these kinds of situations.

We must bear in mind that not all data is public not can it be provided to those that request it. There are certain sensitive issues and the information regarding these cannot be disseminated. In this regard, section 14 of Law 19/2013 on Transparency, Access to Public Information and Good Governance established that public administration and governments cannot provide information when said information may harm national security; defence; foreign relations; public safety; the prevention, investigation and punishing or criminal, administrative or disciplinary wrongdoings; the equality of parties in legal proceedings; the administrative functions of monitoring, inspecting and controlling; economic and commercial interests; economic and monetary policies; professional secrets, intellectual and industrial property; the guarantee of confidentiality or the secret required in decision making processes and the protection of the environment. The application of this limits must always be justified and provided in each specific case. In a conflict situation, the mediation of the Council for Transparency and Good Governance was me requested, and in article 15 the limits derived from personal data protection are regulated.

Council for Transparency and Good Governance

On their web page you can find the details to start the complaint process in order to request the unavailable information. Here you can also check the decisions issued regarding transparency recommendations to other administrations and public bodies. Check the themes regarding these decisions (via this link https://www.consejodetransparencia.es/ct_Home/Actividad/Resoluciones.html) and ask the Administration of your choice for some information on those decisions, exercising your right as it is a decision from the Council for Transparency and Good Governance. The transparency boards endeavour for the effective fulfilment of same, as well as in the Autonomous Communities.



Source of the image https://www.consejodetransparencia.es/ct_Home/consejo.html

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Definition

Citizen participation is the following stage in our path towards **Open Government**. **Citizen participation** aims to involve everyone in society in the actions and decisions that affect us. In the past, the design and launching of public actions with regard to education, sport, libraries, public transport and parks and gardens was considered to be the almost exclusive responsibility of the political representatives.

The **participation in Open Government** means changing this way of acting in order to involve everyone in the actions adopted by governments and launched by public administrations. In short, **citizen participation** involves everyone in public politics, in other words, it involves everyone in education, health, transport, the environment, etc., all those issues that affect society as a whole. With citizen participation, the active position of citizens is reinforced in the management of public matters.

Through **participation mechanisms**, we will empower citizens to express their **opinion on all those public projects** that affect them. But it is also important to enable governments and public administrations to be aware of the ideas and knowledge that are dispersed within society these days.

In any case, citizen participation should be planned well in order to avoid problems, for example, that only groups of people participate or that the participation does not translate into real changes for society.

How Do We Participate?

The main, and most well-known, way of participating politically is to vote in elections. However, in the context of Open Government, participation goes far beyond that.

On the one hand, the **participation in public matters arises from the relationship between governments and public administrations with citizens** in order for the creation and evaluation of **public policies**.



For example, a request can be made so that the central government approves a modification of a law to gradually remove plastic

materials such as plates, glasses and other products manufactured with materials that are complex to recycle and reuse. There is also the possibility of participating in a citizen consultation on sugary drinks for young children in which the government of the Autonomous Community is requested to prevent schools including sugary drinks on the school dining menus for students.

Activity: Brainstorm

There are constantly discussions about the decisions that public powers make: the local council building a square, the central government creating a youth employment plan, or an Autonomous Community's decision to hold a large event that could entail significant costs. What topics and issues would be interesting to put to a citizen consultation? Based on what proposals do you think that you could suggest a consultation that was based on the participation of all citizens? Create a list of topics with your classmates and among you choose 3 essential issues.

On the other hand, **participation for the design of public services aims to incorporate people's vision and experience from the perspective of the users of certain public services**, such as a student at a school, an ill person that accesses a health centre, or a sports person that goes to a municipal sports centre. The aim of this type of participation is **to contribute to the design, redefinition and/or improvement of public services**. In other words, in the previous cases the school/college, health centre or sports centre.

For example, a local council can open a consultancy process or a work group with the residents in the neighbourhood in order to improve the services offered. In one of these meetings, a business association could propose the need to improve the accessibility to the neighbourhood by means of new road infrastructure which would enable a greater access for goods transport.

Those that design the activities in a **sports centre** can hold an assembly in which the neighbourhood's sports teams and clubs participated in order to find out the specific needs of each sport. This will make it easier to plan the spaces and timetables needed for each sport depending on the highlighted needs. Here, citizen participation enables for a greater design of the services and demonstrates that, by giving a voice to citizens, it is possible to improve what governments and public administrations do.

Participation in the State's School Council

As we have seen, we can participate through other means such as consultancy bodies, suggestions or complaints, right to request, etc. An example of this type of participation can be found in the State's School Council, which is a participation entity involving the sectors that are most directly related to education. In fact, this is the body which is consulted regarding the different modifications of the educational legislation in Spain.

Furthermore, each year the State's School Council approves the report on the State Education System, which includes the education improvement proposals that are backed by its members.



Source of the image: <http://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/educacion/mc/cee/portada.html>

In the current context, **citizen participation can go beyond the internet and digital networks**. In the previous examples participation has been understood in terms of in-person participation: assemblies, meetings and discussion groups, etc. It was necessary to be present at a specific time and place to be able to participate.

These days, the **internet** is a new space for citizen participation. Citizens have different tools available that enable them to publish any thought, proposal or suggestion, etc., interacting with governments and public administrations and with other people on an equal level, anywhere; without the need to be physically present. In other words, citizens have the opportunity to develop **new ways of becoming close to political institutions, breaking the traditional rules**. That is why it is essential to take advantage of the advantages presented by technology, whilst also being aware of their problems.



So that you can better understand what this new citizen participation would involve, we must highlight the work of the local councils to promote **citizen participation** on the internet. On a general or specialised web page, some councils enable local residents to decide how to spend their money (choosing between various options), whilst others have consultations about how to rename a street or what option to choose to redevelop a public square. And in these cases, you can participate from school, the library or home- and at any time of the day!

Online Citizen Participation Platforms

Spanish local councils have been very active with regard to developing specialised online platforms for citizen participation. There are so many cases in all Autonomous Communities and Provinces, and only a few of these can be highlighted. As such we have selected two of the largest Spanish cities: Seville and Madrid.

In both cases, the councils have developed a specialised online platform (Decide Sevilla, in Seville, and Decide Madrid, in Madrid) in order to promote citizen participation. Access the web page of each of these and identify what options there are to participate and the opportunities they offer to citizens. Draw up a short list to then discuss this with your classmates.

The screenshot shows the 'Decide Sevilla' website. At the top, there is a header with the 'decide sevilla' logo (a hand pointing to a screen) and the 'NO8DO' logo of the Ayuntamiento de Sevilla. Below the header, a text box explains that 'DECIDE SEVILLA' is a new citizen participation platform for the Ayuntamiento de Sevilla, aimed at all registered residents. It describes how proposals are voted on, debates are held, and initiatives are analyzed. Below the text, there are three main navigation options, each with an icon and an 'Acceder »' button: 'Consultas' (represented by a building icon), 'Y tú, ¿qué opinas?' (represented by a group of people icon), and 'Haz tu propuesta' (represented by a document and pencil icon).

Source of the image: <https://www.sevilla.org/DecideSevilla/>

The screenshot shows the 'Decide Madrid' website. The header is blue with the 'DECIDE MADRID' logo and 'Entrar' and 'Registrarse' buttons. A navigation menu includes 'Debates', 'Propuestas', 'Votaciones', 'Procesos', 'Presupuestos participativos', and 'Ayuda'. The main content area features a banner for 'Presupuestos participativos 2018' with the text 'El Ayuntamiento revisa y tasa los proyectos más apoyados hasta el 15 de mayo' and 'Proyectos más apoyados'. Below the banner is a 'Ver proyectos' button. At the bottom, there are two smaller images: one showing a meeting with the text 'PRESUPUESTOS PARTICIPATIVOS 2018 ASÍ SE EVALÚAN Y TASAN LOS PROYECTOS CIUDADANOS' and another with the text 'EMPIEZA A PARTICIPAR DECÍDETE Y CAMBIA TU CIUDAD'.

Source of the image: <https://decide.madrid.es/>

COLLABORATION

What Does It Involve?

Collaboration is the final stage of our trip to **Open Government**. Collaboration can be understood as the creation of new meeting, dialogue and work spaces where all governments and public administrations participate, including other civil society organisations (NGOs), unions, business organisations, as well as communities of citizens, with the aim of co-creating and co-producing public services. The concept of **collaboration** highlights the value of **innovation**, which as you know refers to doing things in a different way, or even doing things that had not even been imagined previously.

There are many elements for **collaboration** under the umbrella of Open Government. On the one hand, it is important that different governments and public administrations (councils, Autonomous Communities and the General State Administration) understand each other and develop common solutions that benefit society as a whole.

On the other hand, it is essential to integrate all other social agents, given that, due to their growing complexity, governments and public administrations cannot solve social problems in an isolated way. This is a case of recognising that other agents within society, such as companies and tertiary sector organisations (NGOs), etc. can actively contribute to benefit society as a whole with ideas, proposals and solutions.

Of course, **collaboration** cannot come about without everyone's participation. Citizens are the main asset of **collaboration** for an **Open Government**, to the extent that anyone that has capacities, knowledge and know-how can be of use in order to solve specific problems that affect our societies.

As you can imagine, the **collaboration** to build an **Open Government** connects many agents, knowledge and ideas, and it thus requires an in-depth cultural change. The collaborative effort, in a network, is a value in itself and it is necessary in order to promote new perspectives in order to understand problems, work methodology and practices so as to reach innovative solutions.

In short, **collaboration** is made up of different **initiatives that arise from civil society** for the generation of **public value**, in other words, that improve the life of a specific community of citizens that are affected by a problem. An initiative close to you, for example, could involve creating a community in the educational scope in order to improve school performance. The collaboration among different agents that make up part of a community (students, teachers, families, experts, etc.) will result in an innovation prototype that could be used in other educational contexts beyond your school.

Collaboration to improve the transparency in local administrations

An example of **collaboration** could be, for example, a group of councils that try to solve a common problem or encourage some kind of group action (such as boosting the transparency in the local Administration, for example),

in addition to working in connection with the **Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP)**- create a community with all the agents affected by the issue (companies, tertiary sector organisations (NGOs), etc.) as well as groups of citizens that want to contribute to this).

The practice of **collaboration** involves imagining solutions based on innovation; on doing what has been done before in a different way, or doing what has never been done before. For this, proposals for solutions must be suggested that achieve improving the common good and that positively affect different matters: the environment, people's health, the quality of life of those that live in the centre, the sustainability of businesses in the area, etc. As you can imagine, reaching an agreement with all these groups of agents with regard to alternatives and ideas is not simple.

Practising Co-Creation

Co-creation is putting **collaboration** into practice; in other words, it is a way of generating knowledge using experimentation by means of the interaction between institutional, social and political agents. This involves putting the collaboration into practice through methodologies that enable for solutions to be headed towards based on **innovation** for real social problems.

Co-creation acts on specific problems by **means of trialling ways of participating in order to analyse, intervene and come up with solutions**, as well as how to advance towards transformation processes in the behaviour of affected agents, in such a way that new and joint perspectives are facilitated regarding social problems. Thus, the **collaboration** efforts among people that work in public administrations, academics, the private sector and different civil society organisations can be translated in the **increase in the legitimacy and responsibility in the management of public matters**.

In short, **co-creation** is translated into the drive for open **innovation**, creating new public services and improving those that already exist. **Innovation** should therefore be understood as the group of creation processes of these new ideas, along with their application and transformation to benefit society as a whole and it **should be adapted to the context of the different situations, organisations and people involved**. Likewise, organisations and people should adapt themselves to new activities and results derived from the innovation.



NEW TECHNOLOGY, SOCIAL MEDIA AND OPEN GOVERNMENT

If we talk about **technology**, **social media** is a **basic tool for public administrations and governments**. The use of social media across society is an opportunity to develop some of the **values** that we have mentioned previously: innovation, opening, inclusiveness, etc. Likewise, social media should be used responsibly, given that it exposes us to a far more direct relationship with people we do not know.



Examples of the good use of social media by governments and public administrations have multiplied in recent years. A good example is the **Spanish National Police's Twitter (@policia)** which, at present, has more than 3 million followers. If you need to know which police office to go to in order to request your National Identification Document, or who to travel with your dog in the car, all you have to do is send them a message and in the shortest possible time you will receive a response. Check it out!

@policia A example of a new public service by means of social media

The Spanish National Police have a Twitter profile which is the most followed police profile in the world. Their work is focused not only on facilitating public service information regarding safety and emergencies, but also resolving any kind of request from citizens, in other words, it is a two-directional tool. The key to its success lies in using light-hearted language that is relatable, especially for young people. This is, therefore, not just a National Police communication tool, but it is also a means through which citizens can collaborate with the Police, providing information, consulting any issue regarding their area of management. Security is also of interest for Open Government.



Source of the image: <https://twitter.com/policia>

Social media is technology in the reach of governments, public administrations and citizens as a whole. It is a tool that is highly implemented within society, which enables for a **two-way line of communication** to be created in an easy, reliable and accessible way.

Social media as an Open Government instrument

- Social media is the main communication tool and the most viral due to the constant increase of users.
- It enables citizens to freely and transparently express themselves.
- It creates direct communication with citizens by means of dialogue.
- It enables for new means of co-production between public administrations and citizens, improving public services.
- The boundaries between the public and private come down.
- Citizens can put proposals directly to the public administrations.
- It is easy to use: with your mobile and from your house.
- It enables for surveys and public consultations to be undertaken.
- Groups, and discussion or work forums can be created.
- The cost is reduced compared to other types of technology.

2.0 tools are important to transform communication and they can help to create a **greater feeling of trust regarding citizens**. When governments and public administrations use **social media and web 2.0 technology tools** such as blogs, chats, publication of photos and videos, etc., they do so with a greater amount of **informality and spontaneity**, meaning that their day-to-day regarding what they do and how they do becomes more approachable, but it also involves us more in their activities. However, it is important to know that every time we want to initiate a proceeding regarding the Administration, for example to exercise a right or request, we should do by the means established in Law 39/2015 on Common Administrative Procedure.

ABSTRACT:

Through this teaching guide we have wanted for you to delve into the world of **Open Government**. Perhaps at first it may have seemed distant, but we hope that you now consider it to be a matter that affects you very directly and personally. **Open Government** is a philosophy, a new way of governing our societies and understanding our governments and public administrations, based on **transparency, accountability, participation** and **collaboration**, with the aim of taking advantage of citizens' knowledge to involve them in the improvement of our societies. It is a journey through stages that requires involving everyone in society- including you. We hope that starting from now you also become part of the **Open Government** community. We need you.

APPLYING OPEN GOVERNMENT IN THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

Up until now we have seen the more theoretical and conceptual side of **Open Government**, alongside a few practical examples. Now we will start the practice of the principles of **Open Government** through exercising it in the classroom and, specifically, at your educational centre. **How can we introduce the values of Open Government in your educational centre?**



Your educational centre has a group of bodies that are responsible for "governing": the centre's management team- made up of the management, the administrative office and the head of studies-; the teaching staff- made up of all the teachers- and the Centre's Council- made up of teachers, students and their parents, representatives from administrations and services and representatives from the local council where the centre is located.

In the following sections we will explain to you how you can have an **Open School**. In other words, we want the activities at your centre to be undertaken with transparency, so that the people that "govern"

are accountable for their actions, that students and teachers take part in the decisions that are made and that other agents and institutions collaborate to improve the public service that is provided: education.

Afterwards, we will offer you a group of actions focused on that and some steps that you should develop in order to achieve this.

To Have a Transparent Educational Centre...

Remember that **transparency** enables us to obtain the information that we need from a public administration. In this case, we will focus on your education centre. In order to achieve a transparent centre you must bear in mind that there is a law on transparency that limits the information that we can request within the issues that are not excluded by the legislation on transparency. However, there is a large amount of information that we can request in order to use it and re-use it. Below we will explain the three basic steps to achieving a transparent centre: firstly, selecting the information; secondly, requesting the information that we need; and finally, studying it and re-using it in the relevant context.



▲ Step 1: Identify the Problem and the Objectives

If we need to request information from the educational centre (or any other public administration) it is important that we establish which specific problem or issues are moving us to request said information. Beforehand we must consider if we need to know the average grades from the different school years in order to propose a improved studies plan, if we want to know the office materials expenses in order to propose a modification of these or if we seek to obtain information on the average number of students per teacher in order to put forward improvement proposals. Once we know the issue and the objectives, we will pass to the next stage- selecting the information

▲ Step 2: Choose the information

To start it would be interesting to create a catalogue with all the centre information that you may need. A educational centre has a lot of information, and therefore it is essential to know what we want to request and which data is interesting. As an example, we can request the centre's general annual schedule (which contains the programmes of the different subjects that are studied), the centre's educational project (which explains the centre's project with students and their families), the centre's academic results (average marks

per school year and failure rates), the number of students per class, the number of teachers, the centre's annual budgets and the matters that these resources are destined to. We could request this, or other documentation, according to the decision taken in the previous step.



▲ Step 3: Request the information

Once you are clear about the information you are going to need, request this by means of a written document and present this in your centre. To do this, you can explain that you are exercising your righting within the Law on Transparency. Remember that there are limits regarding the information you can access when this involves personal data. You should also take into account that there is complex information that needs time to be gathered.

▲ Step 4: Study and re-use the information

When you have the data you can use this to find out the academic level of your centre, how many students there are, how many teachers you have available or the annual scheduling of the centre. Studying this information will enable you to know your centre better and be more aware of its virtues and the issues on which it can improve. Furthermore, you would be able to re-use the information if you compare it with other centres in your municipality.

If there is any information that you are not provided with, you can ask the Transparency Council to intervene so that it protects your right to request information. Getting a transparent centre is not difficult, but it is a process that requires interest from everyone and a strong commitment from the centre itself.

Finally, you can reuse this information, presenting it in a new format. For this, use the data that you have received from your centre and create a digital product by means of the IT tool of your choice- a graphic, a presentation, a digital poster, a video, etc. - to present to your class and explain to them the process through which you have obtained the data.

We Work for Transparency

Identify those topics or issues that you need to know information about- this could be from your educational centre or from another public administration- bearing in mind the legally established limits. Follow the steps outlined above and obtain the information necessary with the aim of knowing a problem or situation well, resolving it and re-using the information. In the specific case of your educational centre, request, for example, the average grade for the Baccalaureate groups for each subject. This way you will be able to discover the average that different groups tend to have and you will be able to compare it to your own so that, among you all, you try to get the best qualifications. Re-use the data and create a digital poster in which you display the different qualifications as per subject. .

To have a Participative Centre...

Participation can be reflected in different processes and activities within your educational centre. There are currently different mechanisms through which students can exercise their right to participate. However, with the aim of creating an Open School, we want to encourage participation to go beyond these processes.

We can exercise participation in an electoral process for a class delegate or centre council delegate. Other, less known, means could be the participation in processes to choose examination dates or to propose a revision class on a specific topic. Both are completely valid means of participation.

What should we do to create a participative centre? First of all, identify where there are currently cases of participation and where they could exist from now. Secondly, the type of participation should be defined: the mechanisms, means, etc. Finally, and this may seem obvious, you have to participate! If you do not participate, the work that you have done up to that point will all be for nothing.



▲ Step 1: Identify where there is participation and where there could be from now

Firstly, you should identify the participation that already exists in your centre. Usually there is an election process among students to choose a class delegate as well as the student representative in the Educational Centre Council. Likewise, being part of a student association or similar can also be considered conventional participation. However, you must bear in mind that participation goes far beyond that. For this purpose, think about how we can apply this to other areas: choosing the end of year trip, making decisions on behalf of the class or raising complaints or suggestions to the centre's management. Once we know the issue and the objectives, we will pass to the next stage- selecting the information

▲ Step 2: Plan the type of participation

There are certain participative processes that have regulations which determine the way in which participation can take place. For example, in class or Educational Centre Council delegate elections, participation should be undertaken by means of a secret ballot. However, we can come up with new forms of participation, such as online surveys, discussion forums or meetings scheduled to deliberate and decide as a group.

▲ Step 3: Participate!

It seems obvious, but regardless of the reason for and the means of participation, you have to take part and make up part of the decision making process. If you do not participate, others will and they will decide for you. Therefore, do not miss out on the opportunity and actively exercise your right.

We work for participation

In this case we want to focus on the choosing of an end of year trip and we suggest that, as a class, you propose some dates, a destination and a duration, etc. What do you think is the best way to participate in the process of choosing an end of year trip? Hold a class discussion to select the best way and work all together so that the participative process is successfully carried out. This way you will definitely have an excellent end of year trip. You can leave evidence of your work in a video- explaining how the process went-, a short document, a digital poster or a presentation. It will be very interesting for other people to know how you all did this.

To have a Collaborative Centre...

The collaboration between students, teachers and staff at the educational centre with other social agents such as institutes, councils, neighbourhood associations, NGOs, companies and other public and private organisations can have an influence on different improve-

ments for education. Examples include the organisation of conferences on security held by police, for which the collaboration between the relevant police force and the centre would be necessary; the holding of extra-curricular classes in different, unplanned subjects such as dance, swimming, painting and theatre, etc. In this case, a collaboration process would have to be established with the NGOs or companies that provide these services.

There can also be internal collaboration, between groups for example. Perhaps the best way of organising end of year events is with the collaboration between teachers and students from different groups and representatives from the students' parents. In this regard, a good example of collaboration is the Centre Council, made up of the teachers, the students' parents, the council and the students, representatives of administration staff and the centre's services, the local council and students. What can we do to take this process into other areas?



▲ Step 1: Identify a problem where room for collaboration may arise

In addition to the Educational Centre Council example, there are other areas in which collaboration is possible and, often, it is highly necessary. You should find out the issues in which collaboration would be necessary. As we have seen before, when organising a trip, the end of year acts, the management of extra-curricular activities and in undertaking events or courses in the centre. Remember that innovation plays an essential role in collaboration.

▲ Step 2: Identify which agents are needed for the collaboration and where this is going to take place

Each problem will need the collaboration of different agents: a social agent, a neighbourhood association, an NGO, a company, a group of citizens, teachers, etc. As such, you should have a clear idea of the people and organisations that are going to be present in the collaboration space and how this is going to be done: through periodic meetings, online forums or a mixture of all of this. We recommend that, before deciding this, create a document on the collaboration process, which includes all these details. Good organisation of a process is essential in order for it to be successful.

▲ Step 3: Putting collaboration into practice

Collaboration implies that once a problem has been detected, as well as the agents that are going to participate in the process, everything

is put into practice. With the help of the teachers and your class mates you will be capable of collaborating if you are able to think of new ways of solving the problem or new ways in which the agents (parents, council, neighbourhood association, etc.) intervene in the situation.

The result of this collaboration process should be an innovative, new and different way of solving a problem. Once the way of building the result of the collaboration has been decided, it is time for the conclusions. They should be shared and put together by the group of participating agents and they should be pooled to be considered as appropriate. Afterwards, the results should be analysed, in other words, you need to find out if the process has been positive and if modifications are needed in order to improve.

We work on Collaboration

Following on from the previous example of the end of year trip, think about which agents, people or groups may contribute something to the discussion about the trip; from the students that took the trip last year to a company specialising in organising trips like this.

WE HAVE AN OPEN CENTRE. WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

The processes prior to the implementation of an **Open Government** have been carried out in your centre. Now what happens? It has become a centre in which decisions are shared with the entire educational community and the relevant agents, without it losing the essence or quality of the educational public service:

- it is a transparent centre, where all the information is available to citizens and accountability is provided;
- it has become a participative centre, in which decisions are made as a group;
- it has become a collaborative centre, in which students and their families as well as the educational community and society in general are involved in problem solving.

In short, the changes aimed at Open Government have been applied and they can transform the way of governing educational centres in particular and public administrations in general.

RESOURCES: TO FIND OUT MORE

If you want to expand your knowledge about **Open Government**, successful examples, initiatives and other documents of interest, below you have a list which may be helpful.

Electronic Resources

▲ Transparency and Open Government Portals:

- Transparency Portal of the General State Administration
<http://transparencia.gob.es/>
- Transparency Portal of Andalusia
<http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/transparencia.html>
- Transparency Portal of Aragon
<http://transparencia.aragon.es/>
- Transparency Portal of Asturias
www.asturias.es/transparencia
- Transparency Portal of the Balearic Islands
<http://www.caib.es/sacmicrofront/home.do?mkey=M1102141103432671913&lang=es>
- Transparency Portal of the Basque Country
<http://www.gardena.euskadi.eus/inicio/>
- Transparency Portal and Open Government of the Canary Islands
<http://www.gobiernodecanarias.org/transparencia/>
- Transparency Portal of Cantabria
<https://transparencia.cantabria.es/es/inicio>

- Transparency Portal of Castilla-La Mancha
<http://transparencia.castillalamancha.es/>
- Transparency Portal of Castilla León
<https://gobiernoabierto.jcyl.es>
- Open Government Portal of Catalonia
<http://governobert.gencat.cat/es/transparencia/index.html>
- Transparency Portal of Ceuta
<https://ceuta.transparencialocal.gob.es/>
- Open Government Portal of Extremadura
<http://gobiernoabierto.gobex.es/transparencia/>
- Transparency Portal and Open Government of Galicia
<https://transparencia.xunta.gal>
- Transparency Portal of La Rioja
<http://www.larioja.org/portal-transparencia/es>
- Transparency Portal of the Region of Madrid
<http://www.madrid.org/es/transparencia/>
- Transparency Portal of Melilla
https://sede.melilla.es/melillaPortal/transparencia/se_principal1.jsp?language=es&codResi=1
- Transparency Portal and Open Government of Murcia
<http://transparencia.carm.es/>
- Transparency Portal and Open Government of Navarre
<http://www.gobiernoabierto.navarra.es/es/transparencia>
- Transparency Portal of the Valencian Community
<http://www.gvaoberta.gva.es>
- Open Government Partnership
<https://www.opengovpartnership.org/>
- Transparency Portal of the Judicial Power
<http://www.poderjudicial.es/cgpj/es/Temas/Transparencia/>
- The City Council of Madrid Citizen Participation Portal
<https://decide.madrid.es/>

▲ Open Data Portals

- The Government of Spain's Open Data Portal
<http://datos.gob.es/>
- EU Open Data Portal
<https://data.europa.eu/euodp/es/data/>

▲ Transparency Council Portals

- Transparency Council Portal of Spain
https://www.consejodetransparencia.es/ct_Home/consejo.html
- Transparency Council Portal of Andalusia
<http://www.ctpdandalucia.es/es>
- Transparency Council Portal of Aragon
<http://transparencia.aragon.es/CTAR>
- Transparency Council Portal of Asturias
http://www.consejodetransparencia.es/ct_Home/transparencia/transparencia-en-espanya/asturias.html
- Transparency Council Portal of the Balearic Islands
<https://www.caib.es/sites/informaciopublica/ca/inici/?campa=yes>

- Transparency Council Portal of the Basque Country
<http://www.gardena.euskadi.eus/transparencia/-/derecho-de-acceso-a-la-informacion-publica/>
- Transparency Council Portal of the Canary Islands
<https://www.transparenciacanarias.org/>
- Transparency Council Portal of Cantabria
http://www.consejodetransparencia.es/ct_Home/transparencia/transparencia-en-espanya/Cantabria.html
- Transparency Council Portal of Castilla-La Mancha
http://www.consejodetransparencia.es/ct_Home/transparencia/transparencia-en-espanya/castillalamancha.html
- Transparency Council Portal of Castilla León
<https://www.procuradordelcomun.org/>
- Committee to Guarantee the Right to Assess Public Information of Catalonia
<http://www.gaip.cat/ca/inici>
- Transparency Council Portal of Ceuta
http://www.consejodetransparencia.es/ct_Home/transparencia/transparencia-en-espanya/ceuta.html
- Transparency Council Portal of Extremadura
http://www.consejodetransparencia.es/ct_Home/transparencia/transparencia-en-espanya/extremadura.html
- Transparency Council Portal of Galicia
<http://www.valedordopobo.gal/es/el-valedor-do-pobo-organo-de-control-de-la-transparencia/>
- Transparency Council Portal of La Rioja
https://www.consejodetransparencia.es/ct_Home/transparencia/transparencia-en-espanya/larioja.html
- Transparency Council Portal of the Region of Madrid
https://www.consejodetransparencia.es/ct_Home/transparencia/transparencia-en-espanya/madrid.html
- Transparency Council Portal of Melilla
http://www.consejodetransparencia.es/ct_Home/transparencia/transparencia-en-espanya/melilla.html
- Transparency Council Portal of Murcia
<http://transparencia.carm.es/consejo-de-la-transparencia-de-la-region-de-murcia>
- Transparency Council Portal of Navarre
<http://www.gobiernoabierto.navarra.es/es/consejo-transparencia/consejo-transparencia-navarra>
- Transparency Council Portal of the Valencian Community
<http://www.conselltransparencia.gva.es/>

▲ Publications

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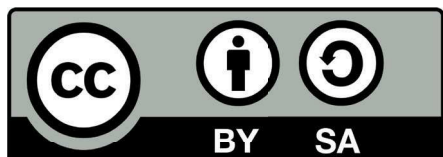
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