



## Io partecipo - The eParticipation community in Emilia-Romagna

Acronym of the case: **Io partecipo**

Web address of the case: <http://www.iopartecipo.net>

Country of the case: **Italy**

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### Case Abstract

Io partecipo – I participate – is the new project set up by Emilia-Romagna Region to provide its citizens with information services, listening/open communication channels, aiming at promoting participation in public life. The main access channel is the web area [www.iopartecipo.net](http://www.iopartecipo.net) which uses the e-democracy open source kit developed and used by a consortium of regional agencies, within the framework of the Partecipa.net project.

**MISSION:** setting up of a system of permanent and meaningful relations with citizens in Emilia-Romagna Region, with methods and tools fostering participation in regional policies. The goals of Io Partecipo are translated into specific services delivered online. **INFORMING:** iopartecipo.net delivers customized information: at the basis of the services, there is the identification of users' groups having specific interests and needs. **SUPPORTING:** iopartecipo.net offers customized consulting services. Experts in different fields answer directly to specific citizens' questions and, if they are of general interest, publish them on the web. All the consulting services are delivered free of charge. **CONSULTING:** iopartecipo.net carries out poll taking on specific themes, which represent a venue for direct and active participation of users according to their interests and needs.

The goal consists in creating a two-way relation with users, based on a concrete and constant mutual exchange of data between the administration and its citizens. **DIALOGUE:** iopartecipo.net activates periodical online forums to open a direct dialogue with citizens on issues and topics of particular public relevance. In a virtual space, different subjects discuss together, and have the opportunity to exchange opinions and points of views. **COOPERATING:** iopartecipo.net offers citizens the opportunity to become editors! Through a specific form they can send news, indications and articles to the Io partecipo editing room.

### [Description of the case](#)

Domain

[eGovernment](#)

Topic

[eParticipation, eDemocracy and eVoting](#)

Sector



## Local/Regional Community Development

Start date - End date

January 2008 (Ongoing)

Date operational

January 2009

Target Users

Citizen

Target Users Description

The project focuses on two types of targets which can be classified as:

- internal;
- external.

The project internal target comprises the services of the administration which can use the new communication system to optimise and/or increase their information channel to citizens.

To reach this target, internal marketing actions are carried out within the Region; they are: project promotion (fostering knowledge) and support tools for participants (fostering utilisation).

The external target is the primary one, the citizens (4 million in Emilia-Romagna). Only if they are reached, the goals would have been reached; with respect to citizens, the actions to be activated are both information/promotion and education/consultation.

Besides making use of the classic channels of mass communication, traditional media and new-media, the project will be promoted with a campaign which will bring all over the territory a "Io Partecipo corner", with dedicated staff, where citizens who are interested in becoming service users may find information and support. The activity will be informational/educational and will try to reach the target groups who are usually not much interested in technologies (therefore with less possibilities to be informed of the project directly from the web) with an indication and support action.

The campaign will bring the "Io Partecipo corner" in every Public Relation Office (URP), all over the regional territory, and in all public events with some connections with the project goals (trade shows, events, conferences, etc).

Scope

Regional (sub-national)

Status

Operation

Language(s)

Italian

**Policy Context and Legal Framework**

## Project Size and Implementation

Type of initiative

Participation



## Overall Implementation approach

Public administration

Technology choice

Open source software

Funding source

Public funding regional

Project size

Implementation: €49-299,000

Yearly cost:

€1-49,000

## Implementation and Management Approach

The organisational structure has been designed to support the project management in terms of direction, control and coordination of activities comprised in the work plan, in accordance to defined objectives.

In particular, the roles defined are:

1. Project Coordination.
2. Central editing room.
3. System administration.
4. Local URP editing room.
5. Local editing room.
6. Experts.
7. Editors.

## Technology solution

IOpartecipo establishes its foundations on reuse and open source/free software; tools chosen by governments for e-democracy initiatives have to be totally "transparent" in the management of information.

Transparency must be met, at a technical level, for the management of data/information that people "provides" to the authorities and vice versa. A participation process must ensure the possibility of access and retrieval and verification of data that have been exchanged. Transparency has to be independent from technical suppliers and long-lasting because it allows the verification of the data by anyone with appropriate technical skills. Software applications that by default possess these characteristics are those licensed as free or open source software (depending on the license with which they are issued for use) therefore should be considered as a necessary choice for participation.

A building block of IOpartecipo, from the technical and organizational point of view, is the "E-democracy Kit" developed by a previous e-democracy project: Partecipa.net. At the beginning of the IOpartecipo project, Partecipa.net counted several installations (at least 8 in different municipalities and provinces in Emilia Romagna Region) of its tools. IOpartecipo includes and enhanced Partecipa.net tools and methods.

The applications chosen to be part of the Partecipa.net's Kit are widely consolidated from the technical point of view and based on Internet applications already widely used. The E-democracy Kit contains:



- open source software applications and their technical documentation;
- methodological instructions to support the use of the applications. These instructions outlines:
  - the competencies needed to use the tools;
  - the organizational processes needed to set up the back office of the participation processes.

the Kit is therefore a set of applications to distribute information on selected issues and to manage decentralized editorial offices of different City Services. The citizen expresses its own preferences when he subscribes to the service via the web; these preferences can be changed at any time and Information are distributed via e-mail. Moreover these tools let citizen free to address questions on specific themes and get on-line customized answers from experts or to participate to surveys. In addition to the software tools, the Kit is a successfully tested methodology for the set up of a set of editorial units and for the monitoring of services appreciation and satisfaction.

The Kit includes also an “enhanced forum”: a web-based platform including forum, poll and document repository enabling fruitful and constructive debate between citizens and politicians with the intention of facilitating and encouraging "online-democracy" using the Delphi method. The Delphi method can be described as a method for structuring a group communication process that allows a group of individuals as a whole to deal with a complex problem effectively.

The Delphi method is a technique for eliciting and refining the group judgments of recognized experts in situations where exact knowledge is not available but where partial information is available at the disposal of the individuals in the group; finally IOpartecipo gives the opportunity dedicated to become an editor, involving the users in providing news and information of common interest and encouraging civic journalism initiatives.

As a conclusion, from a technical and methodological point of view IOpartecipo reuses and enhances a set of applications licensed as OS/free software and methodologies for eparticipation. These tools have been designed from the outset as open, easy to install and neutral with respect to the thematic of citizen involvement.

### [Impact, innovation and results](#)

#### **Impact**

The expected positive results of the project are mainly linked to the quantity and quality of relations between the public administration and citizens.

The project can also bring benefits to the public administration, in view of a self-reforming action, considering that public bodies and agencies are perceiving the need to open channels of on-going and direct dialogue with citizens, in order to deliver services and policies respondent to their real needs.

Citizens may find in the Io Partecipo portal a “menu” of general information and services, from which they can select their areas of interest and have a general view of the regional activities (starting from an initial selection and subsequent enlargement), with respect to issues, services, policies, thus facilitating their interactive involvement.

#### **Lessons learnt**



In these months we have learned that: - the technical aspect was more problematic than expected - the organizational aspect was an opportunity - the political support could be a problem, but we decide to persist.

Fonte: <http://epractice.eu/en/cases/iopartecipoawards>