Independent Reporting Mechanism Macedonia: Progress Report 2012–13

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: MACEDONIA

Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) Progress Report 2012–13

Macedonia's action plan was innovative and ambitious in many respects. The country began several initiatives in the areas of transparency, accountability, and technology and innovation for openness and accountability that have strong potential in the coming years. Going forward the government can proactively involve multiple stakeholders in the OGP process and civil society organisations could take advantage of the opportunities created by the government to engage in the OGP process.

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a voluntary international initiative that aims to secure commitments from governments to their citizenry to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. The Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) carries out a biannual review of the activities of each OGP participating country.

Macedonia officially began participating in OGP in August 2011, when the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nikola Poposki, declared the government's intent to join.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) coordinated Macedonia's initial involvement in OGP. Later the government transferred the responsibility to the Ministry for Information Society and Administration (MISA). The first action plan was developed by MISA, with support from the World Bank. The development of the action plan took place amid ongoing public sector reform focused on open government and e-government. Overall, participation of other ministries and responsible authorities was limited, even those directly responsible for commitments in the action plan.

OGP PROCESS

Countries participating in the OGP follow a process for consultation during development of their OGP action plan and during implementation.

In Macedonia, in mid-2012 an inter-ministerial working group was constituted by the MFA and included representatives from civil society and business sector. However, the process of consultation to develop the action plan took place at the agency (MISA) level. No details about the process of consultation or specific timelines were made available prior to consultations. An advance notice of just three days was provided to the public for comment on the draft action plan. Government officials noted that placing notifications on a web portal was sufficient to cover all interested parties.

After the draft action plan was posted on the e-democracy portal, representatives from the business sector, academia, and civil society organisations working on IT were invited by MISA to participate in, in-person consultations. Participants noted a lack of focus on issues related to institution management, legal framework, and transparency of government. Few written recommendations were accepted, but summaries of these comments were not made available. Overall, it was difficult to assess the meaningfulness of consultations on the development of the action plan.

Even though the government published its self-assessment report after providing two weeks for public comment, the report had several weaknesses. The report assessed only four out of nine programmatic areas, did not provide information on a vast majority of commitments, and did not identify areas where government can work to improve openness and accountability.

This report was prepared by Neda Korunovska, Reactor—Research in Action.

At a glance

Participating since: 2011
Number of commitments: 35

Level of Completion

Completed: **2 of 35**
Substantial: **6 of 35**
Limited: **17 of 35**
Not started: **10 of 35**

Timing

On schedule: **9 of 35**
Ahead of schedule: **1 of 35**

Commitment emphasis:

Access to information: **21of 35**
Participation: **10 of 35**
Accountability: **2 of 35**
Tech & innovation for transparency & accountability: **1 of 35**
Unclear: **3 of 35**

Number of commitments with:

Clear relevance to an OGP Value: **32 of 35**
Moderate or transformative potential impact: **16 of 35**
Substantial or complete implementation: **8 of 35**
All three (✪): **6 of 35**

COMMITMENT IMPLEMENTATION

As part of OGP, countries are required to make commitments in a two-year action plan. Table 1 summarizes each commitment, its level of completion, its ambition, and whether it falls within Macedonia's planned schedule and the key next steps for the commitment in future OGP action plans. Macedonia's plan contained thirty-five commitments grouped under nine objectives related to OGP values, as evidenced below. Macedonia completed two of its thirty-five commitments. Table 2 summarizes the IRM assessment of progress on each commitment.

Table 1: Assessment of Progress by Commitment

COMMITMENT SHORT NAME	POTENTIAL IMPACT				LEVEL OF COMPLETION				TIMING	NEXT STEPS
✪COMMITMENT IS CLEARLY RELEVANT TO OGP VALUES AS WRITTEN, HAS SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL IMPACT, AND IS SUBSTANTIALLY OR COMPLETELY IMPLEMENTED.	NONE	MINOR	MODERATE	TRANSFORMATIVE	NOT STARTED	LIMITED	SUBSTANTIAL	COMPLETE		
✪**O1.M1: ENER Online Participatory Tool in Legislation Making:** 1. **Publishing Draft Laws—**Publish information on pre-legislative process for all draft laws, including a link to ENER. 2. **ENER Usage Data—**Ministry of Information Society and Administration should compare data on ENER usage.	▓	▓	▓		▓	▓	▓		Behind schedule	**Further work** on basic implementation
O1.M2. Online Tool for Participatory Policy-Making—Increase multi-stakeholder participation in policy processes.	▓	▓	▓		▓	▓	▓		Behind schedule	**Revision of commitment** to be more achievable or measurable
O1.M3. Introduction of Online Petitions—Introduce online petitions with signatures.	▓	▓			▓	▓			Behind schedule	Further work
O1.M4. Implement Strategy for Co-operation between Government and Civil Society—Implement the strategy for co-operation between government and civil society.	▓				▓	▓			Behind schedule	Further work
O1.M5. Code of Best Practices for NGO Involvment—Improve code of best practices for NGO in policy-making processes.	▓	▓	▓		▓				Behind schedule	Abandon Commitment
✪**O2.M1. www.opendata.gov.mk—**Establish an open-data portal to publish information in open-data format and prepare a catalog of websites with access to open data.	▓	▓	▓		▓	▓	▓	▓	On schedule	**New commitment** building on existing implementation
O2.M2. Development of Business Model for Open Data—Develop indicators to evaluate the benefit of open data to small- and medium-sizedenterprises.	▓				▓				Behind schedule	Abandon Commitment
O2.M3. Prioritizing Opening of Data—Enable citizens' and companies to submit priority lists on information to be published as open data.	▓	▓			▓				Behind schedule	Revision of commitment

COMMITMENT SHORT NAME	POTENTIAL IMPACT				LEVEL OF COMPLETION				TIMING	NEXT STEPS
✪COMMITMENT IS CLEARLY RELEVANT TO OGP VALUES AS WRITTEN, HAS SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL IMPACT, AND IS SUBSTANTIALLY OR COMPLETELY IMPLEMENTED.	NONE	MINOR	MODERATE	TRANSFORMATIVE	NOT STARTED	LIMITED	SUBSTANTIAL	COMPLETE		
O2.M4. Use of Inter-operable Services for Open Data—Motivate and inspire institutions to learn from one another on Open Data.	█	█	█		█				Behind schedule	Abandon Commitment
O2.M5. Implemtation of Plans for Opening State Institutions' Information—Plan and monitor institutional plans on information sharing.	█	█	█	█	█	█			On schedule	Revision of commitment
✪**O2.M6. Analyze Legal Framework for Open Data**—Remove legal obstacles in enabling information-sharing through open data.	█	█	█		█	█	█		On schedule	Further work
✪**O3.M1. Improving Services through www.uslugi.gov.mk**—Ensure better quality of services by enabling citizens' to assess services and provide feedback using the portal.	█	█			█	█	█		On schedule	Further work
O3.M2. Integrate, Update, and Publish Citizen Logs—Determine obligations for institutions to integrate, update, and publish citizen logs.	█	█			█	█			On schedule	Further work
✪**O3.M3. "Traffic Light" Project**—Publish results of public administration project from the perspective of citizens' satisfaction.	█	█	█		█	█	█		On schedule	Further work
O3.M4. Provision of Government Services through Cloud Computing—Use cloud computing to improve co-operation among public institutions and increase efficiency of government services.	█	█			█				Behind schedule	Abandon commitment
O3.M5. Introduce One-Off Request for Information from Citizens—Implement law on electronic management and consolidate databases.	█	█	█		█				Behind schedule	Abandon commitment
O4.M1. Publish Easy to Search Public Information—Improve access to public information by publishing information in formats that makes it easy to search and use.	█	█	█		█				Behind schedule	Revision of commitment
O4.M2. Freedom of Information: 1. **Use of Harm Test**—Use the Damage Test in Commission for Access to Public Character Information (2012–2014). 2. **Publish Information Gathered through the Free Access Law**—Information accessed under the Law on Free Access to Public Character Information should be published and made accessible for all.	█				█	█			Behind schedule	Revision of commitment
O4.M3. Ratify Council of Europe Convention on Access to Public Documents—Adopt Law on Ratification of Council of Europe Convention on Access to Public Documents, signed in 2009.	█	█			█				Behind schedule	Further work

COMMITMENT SHORT NAME	POTENTIAL IMPACT				LEVEL OF COMPLETION				TIMING	NEXT STEPS
✪COMMITMENT IS CLEARLY RELEVANT TO OGP VALUES AS WRITTEN, HAS SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL IMPACT, AND IS SUBSTANTIALLY OR COMPLETELY IMPLEMENTED.	NONE	MINOR	MODERATE	TRANSFORMATIVE	NOT STARTED	LIMITED	SUBSTANTIAL	COMPLETE		
O4.M4. Electronic Submission of Requests—Make electronic submission of requests for information under the Free Access Law, and upgrade the website of the Commission for Access to Public Character Information.	●				●				Behind schedule	Abandon commitment
O4.M5. Training Access to Information Officers—Train officials incharge of Law on Free Access to Public Character Information.	●	●			●	●			Behind schedule	New commitment
O5.M1. Identify Areas of Low Interest to Business and Publish Research—Identify information relevant to citizens that the private sector will not invest in, and publish publicly financed research.	●	●	●	●	●				Behind schedule	Further work
O5.M2. Scientific and Research Co-operation through Internet—Publish information that will promote scientific and research co-operation through the Internet.	●	●	●		●				Behind schedule	Revision of commitment
O5.M3. Publish Information from the Statistical Office—Publish information from Statisitical Office for use by scientists.	●	●	●	●	●				Behind schedule	Revision of commitment
O6.M1. Available Information about Inspectorates—Identify information that is useful for citizens and businesses, and publish information on Inspectorates' websites.	●	●	●		●	●			On Schedule	Revision of commitment
O6.M2. Introduce Integrity Systems for Anti-corruption Policies in Public Administration—Define methodology and procedures to implement anti-corruption policies in public administrations, including relevant electronic tools.	●	●	●	●	●				Behind schedule	Further work
O7.M1. Open Budget Initiative—Publish budget as open data.	●	●	●		●	●			On schedule	Revision of commitment
O7.M2. Public Procurement—Improve transparency and openness of public procurement system.	●	●			●	●			Behind schedule	Revision of commitment
O7.M3. Foreign Assistance and Investments—Consolidate information on foreign assistance and investment and prioritize data that qualifies as open data.	●	●			●	●			Behind schedule	Revision of commitment
O8.M1. Opening of Information by Municipalities—Open information to stimulate competition between municipalities.	●				●	●			Behind schedule	Revision of commitment
O8.M2. Free Access to Information Training for Local Self-Government Officials—Train municipal officials to better implement Law on Free Access to Public Character Information.	●	●	●		●	●			Behind schedule	New commitment

COMMITMENT SHORT NAME	POTENTIAL IMPACT				LEVEL OF COMPLETION				TIMING	NEXT STEPS
✪COMMITMENT IS CLEARLY RELEVANT TO OGP VALUES AS WRITTEN, HAS SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL IMPACT, AND IS SUBSTANTIALLY OR COMPLETELY IMPLEMENTED.	NONE	MINOR	MODERATE	TRANSFORMATIVE	NOT STARTED	LIMITED	SUBSTANTIAL	COMPLETE		
✪**O8.M3. Integrity System on Local Level:** 1. **Establish Methodology for Introduction of Integrity Systems on Local Level** 2. **Pilot the Integrity System in Ten Municipalities**	█	█	█		█	█	█		On schedule	Revision of commitment
O9.M1. Promotion of Consumer Information—Increase access to information for consumers and citizens on health, education, food, energy efficiency, fuel efficiency, environment protection, financial services, social protection, and gender.	█				█	█	█		Behind schedule	Further work
O9.M2. Availability of Information Related to Road Safety, AirQuality, Safety of Workers—Harmonize information on regulations, better implement regulatory obligations, and improve availability and quality of information on road safety, air quality, and worker safety.	█				█	█	█		Behind schedule	Revision of commitment
O9.M3. Public Health Information—Identify data and information to improve citizens' access to relevant information on health.	█	█			█	█	█	█	Ahead of schedule	New commitment

Table 2: Summary of Progress by Commitment

NAME OF COMMITMENT	SUMMARY OF RESULTS
✪COMMITMENT IS CLEARLY RELEVANT TO OGP VALUES AS WRITTEN, HAS SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL IMPACT, AND IS SUBSTANTIALLY OR COMPLETELY IMPLEMENTED.	
✪O1.M1. ENER Online Participatory Tool in Legislation Making • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: Moderate • Completion: Substantial	The single electronic register of regulations (ENER) was introduced in 2009. Before it's inclusion in the OGP action plan, this commitment did not have the mandatory 30-day period for public consultation. The commitment was substantially implemented and increased access to information on draft legislation. In 2012, the ENER was improved to remove difficulties in its operation and other weaknesses. The proposed changes were substantial, but civil society organisations were not aware of these changes. Despite the progress, there are challenges: the website is not easy to navigate and data is not presented in open data formats. Most notably, ENER does not provide opportunity for public comment at all stages and is limited to the final state of the legislative process. There is also lack of awareness about ENER among civil society organizations and government officials.
O1.M2. Online Tools for Participatory Policy-Making • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: Moderate • Completion: Limited	An e-democracy web portal (www.e-demokratija.gov.mk) was launched to increase public awareness on participation in policy-making. However, it is unclear whether its current use can be considered satisfactory for promoting participation in policy-making. The commitment is a step forward for increased public participation since the website promotes a number of online participatory mechanisms (documents, blogs, idea submissions area, and a forum). However, both the stakeholders and the government made very limited use of the commitment. Further work is recommended on raising awareness about the portal, and on promoting guidelines for using the portal by public institutions.

O1.M3. Introduce Online Petitions • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: Minor • Completion: Not started	The aim of this commitment was to introduce online petitions. A petition on an issue must be supported by 5,000 citizens through the use of digital certificates and other non-digital mechanisms. However, this commitment did not start as planned. CSOs nevertheless noted the progressive nature of the commitment to improve citizen-government interaction on topics of public interest. One of the big challenges of this otherwise notable commitment is unaffordability of certificates to submit signatures online. It was recommended that the minimum number of petitions is reduced, the mechanism of submitting petitions is improved, and citizens should be allowed to use other ways such as through parliamentary groups that are willing to propose policies, to take up issues raised by citizens' petitions.
O1.M4. Implement Strategy for Co-operation between Government and Civil Society • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: None • Completion: Limited	Starting in 2012, the Macedonian government implemented its Second Strategy for Co-operation with the Civil Society Sector. The strategy aims to support and develop a partnership between government and civil society. The IRM researcher found this commitment was partially implemented. Overall, OGP did not stretched government's efforts in the implementation of the Strategy for Co-operation with the Civil Society Sector; however, government officials feel that the inclusion in the action plan stimulated an enabling environment and needs to ensure better implementation in the future. The government should also allocate sufficient resources to implement the strategy in accordance with the action plan.
O1.M5. Code of Best Practices for NGO Involvement • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: Moderate • Completion: Limited	A year before joining the OGP, the government adopted the Code of Best Practices for NGO Involvement. The code promotes the use of various instruments for involvement of the civil sector such as interactive websites, ENER, conferences, trainings, joint working groups, and joint campaigns. The OGP action plan envisioned an improvement of the code by the end of 2012. Both the civil society sector and the state administrative bodies made very limited use of the commitment's outputs. During the two years of the code's implementation only one organisation submitted a proposal to the relevant government ministries. The IRM researcher found limited implementation of the commitment, and it did not stretch government practice beyond the baseline. It is recommended this commitment should be abandoned.
✪O2.M1. www.opendata.gov.mk • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: Moderate • Completion: Complete	The government launched a web portal for open data. The commitment envisioned a platform that links to other public institution websites. This commitment was completed. While transformative, this commitment should be shaped into a new commitment that addresses identified problems, such as the unavailability of an inventory of data held by public institutions and a lack of human resources and ICT equipment.
O2.M2. Development of Business Model Open Data • OGP Value Relevance: Unclear • Potential Impact: None • Completion: Not started	According to government officials, this commitment was dependent on available data, in open data format, produced by public institutions. Since Macedonia recently began implementing open data formats, this commitment did not start as planned. While this commitment could contribute to economic growth, as written, it is unclear how it will promote core OGP values of transparency, public participation, and accountability.
O2.M3. Prioritizing Opening of Data • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: Minor • Completion: Not started	No activities were undertaken by responsible authorities to assess and identify information and data needs of different stakeholders. Even though the commitment envisioned the use of online consultations, no such consultations took place in the first year. Among other concerns, stakeholders noted that relying on online tools could result in over emphasis of issues related to businesses, transparency organisations, and other big organisations from the Capital, and under representation of marginalised groups. Going forward, an inventory of databases and data registers should be proactively published to ensure informed consultations with multiple stakeholders. A strategy for timely release of data should be developed and stakeholders should be involved in monitoring compliance.
O2.M4. Use of Inter-operable Services for Open Data • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: Moderate • Completion: Not started	This commitment was based on a new reform introduced in 2011, to improve delivery and quality of public services through inter-electronic data exchange between state administration bodies and institutions. This commitment has not started. According to government, institutions, such as the Health Fund; Employment Agency; Pension and Disability Insurance Fund; and Ministry of Agriculture Forestry, and Water Management were connected. However, interoperability, as envisioned, has not guided the opening of the data. This commitment could have stretched government practice beyond the baseline, but it was not implemented. In the next action plan, this commitment should be abandoned and merged with commitment O2M1 (web portal for open data).

O2.M5. Implementation of Plans for Opening State Institutions' Information • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: Transformative • Completion: Limited	This commitment reflects the concerns of civil society on the importance of proactive disclosure of data and goes further by envisioning release of data in open formats. This two-part commitment aims to prepare plans for opening data to be adopted by information holders and to monitor implementation of proactive release of data in open format. It could transform government practices and significantly increase the scope of available data. However, civil society noted that preparatory measures to guide information holders to ensure implementation of the open data standard were not undertaken. Going forward, guidelines for information holders should be developed; government-held information should be made available proactively, in existing formats, until open data formats are developed; and stakeholders should be inculded in monitoring bodies.
✪O2.M6. Analyse Legal framework for Open Data • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: Moderate • Completion: Substantial	This commitment aims to (a) analyse the legal framework to enable implementation of open data and (b) amend the current legislation to remove identified obstacles, if any. The government is in the advanced stage of analysing the relevant European legislations governing re-use of data from the public sector. While good progress has been made, the government needs to implement supplementary measures that ensure the adopted legislation will be enforced. Going forward, the government should ensure a participatory approach in the legislative reform process, especially in the analysis and evaluation of the alternatives.
✪O3.M1. Improving Services through www.uslugi.gov.mk • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: Moderate • Completion: Substantial	A mechanism for citizens to provide feedback on how to improve public services was introduced: http://uslugi.gov.mk. While this commitment could provide the channels to enhance public participation in policy-making, it is too early to assess its usefulness. Currently, citizens' comments and feedback on public services are not published on the portal. Another challenge is maintaining the accuracy of data available on the portal that covers various public institutions. Finally, there are langaugae barriers that prevent all citizens from using the platform—currently, information is available in Macedonaian. Further work is necessary on the implementation of this commitment. Specifically, citizens' comments should be published online, and information should be made available in other languages apart from Macedonian.
O3.M2. Integrate, Update, and Publish Citizen Logs • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: Minor • Completion: Substantial	The aim of this commitment was to solve the problem of lack of communication and information regarding provision of public services. The usage of the citizens' logs vary from institution to institution, with high usage among some institutions (such as customs), through limited usage among universities. However, the data is scattered throughout a wide range of institutions, and the OGP action plan envisaged integrating, updating, and publishing the citizen logs. The commitment could facilitate public participation and possibly increase citizens' trust in public institutions. While the implementation is on time, the IRM researcher found that implementation varies across different responsible bodies, and having in mind the wide scope of the institutions covered, stakeholders should remember this will remain a challenge in the future. It is recommended that civil society could be supported to conduct an independent assessment of the usage and usefulness of the logs.
✪O3.M3. "Traffic Light" Project • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: Moderate • Completion: Substantial	This commitment seeks to incorporate citizens' input to evaluate the work of administration. An easy evaluation channel will enable citizens' to provide satisfaction feedback by simply pushing butons: red (dissatisfied); yellow (neither); or green (satisfied), depending on their satisfaction levels. The project was launched prior to OGP, and the new feature included, making data available in open data format. The commitment promotes transparency by enabling citizens' to evaluate the administrations' work and to record satisfaction levels. However, it remains limited in its scope. The IRM researcher found limited use by citizens.The IRM researcher recommends further work on basic implementation of the commitment. Going forward, the government should try to identify, in co-operation with stakeholders, the reasons behind low levels of usage of the project by citizens and design measures to address identified obstacles, and make an independent inquiry about its usefulness from administrative workers who were evaluated, including senior staff.
O3.M4. Provision of Government Services Through Cloud Computing • OGP Value Relevance: Unclear • Potential Impact: Minor • Completion: Limited	The level of digitalisation of the data held by the different institutions is being assessed by the Ministry of Information Society and Administration. According to government officials, the government will make a decision whether this measure is financially and organisationally justified before continuing implementation. The process is still within the government, so consulted stakeholders could not contribute in the IRM researcher's review.

O3.M5. Introduce One-Off Request for Information from Citizens • OGP Value Relevance: Unclear • Potential Impact: Moderate • Completion: Limited	This commitment reaffirmed the reform in management of the public record introduced with the Law on Electronic Management adopted in 2009. While the legislation should have been enforced since September 2011, its implementation is delayed due to lack of technical and human resources within the different authorities. This commitment is part of the e-government strategy that contributes to the improvement of public services. While e-government remains a useful tool in providing services to citizens, this commitment is irrelevant for OGP. As written, this commitment does not clearly articulate how it will promote or utilise core OGP values of transparency, participation, and accountability.
O4.M1. Publish Easy to Search Public Information • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: Minor • Completion: Limited	Although the Freedom of Information (FOI) Law existed before OGP, the perceived benefit of this commitment was to publish all information held and created by information holders in a format that makes them ready to use. However, inclusion of the commitment in the OGP action plan without an analysis of whether public institutions are ready to transition from paper to efficient electronic record made the commitment inapplicable. The Commission for Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information had a limited budget for 2012, which was the main reason behind the failure to publish the List of Public Information Holders, pursuant to the law and to upgrade the website. A significant revision of the commitment is recommended to make it more achievable.
O4.M2. Freedom of Information: Use of Harm Test; Publish Information Gathered through Free Access Law • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: None • Completion: Limited	Two independent commitments related to the enforcement of the Law on Free Access to Public Information, which entered in effect in 2006 were adopted. The IRM found no implementation in practice of the second part of the commitment regarding the publication of information gathered through the Free Access Law. The 2010 amendments to the Law on Free Access to Public Information stipulate that the harm test is mandatory for information holders when they deny access to information. Reports of various non-governmental organisations have noted cases in which the harm test is not implemented. The IRM researcher did not find a single case in which the information holder assessed—after having implemented the harm test—that public interest has primacy. A significant revision of the commitment is recommend. The government should ensure that it contributes to solving the problem of lack of implementation of the harm test in practice, and publish information gathered through the Free Access Law.
O4.M3. Ratify Council of Europe Convention on Access to Public Documents • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: Minor • Completion: Not started	Macedonia was among the first 12 signatory countries of the Council of Europe Convention on Access to Public Documents in June 2009. Prior to OGP, the non-government organisations lobbied to prepare a draft law for ratification of this convention and submitted an analysis on the country's readiness for ratification. The government self-assessment does not contain any information about this commitment. Ratification of the Convention on Access to Public Documents will mean a step forward in improving and promoting the right to free access to information. Further work on the basic implementation of this commitment is recommended.
O4.M4. Electronic Submission of Requests • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: None • Completion: Not started	This commitment focused on upgrading (or designing a new) website of the Commission for Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information, to ensure timely management of data, statistics, and information requests. The commission identified four main challenges: (1) lack of human resources; (2) modest annual budgets for 2012 and 2013 that prevented an upgrade or designing a new website; (3) lack of funds for additional training for information mediation officers tasked to deal with electronic information requests; and (4) lack of valid e-mail addresses for information holders to submit requests for free access to information. This commitment could be abandoned as it duplicates actions anticipated under objective 4, commitments 1 and 2, and objective 4, commitment2.
O4.M5. Training Access to Information Officers • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: Minor • Completion: Limited	This commitment existed prior to OGP, as an obligation anticipated in the 2006 Law on Free Access to Public Information. Nevertheless, its inclusion in the OGP action plan could contribute to increased funds to support the operation of the Commission for Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information. This could address the challenges faced by the commission concerning the training of newly appointed information mediation officers at information holders who will replace officers that have already been trained. Going forward, the government could allocate more funds in the commission's budget; better staff the commission; and propose policy and legislative changes to train multiple stakeholders, such as information requesters, journalists, citizens, and associationson access to information.

O5.M1. Identify Areas of Low Interest to Business and Publish Research • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: Transformative • Completion: Not started	The Ministry of Education and Science publishes calls for financing research projects, but these are not based on identified needs of citizens or areas in which the private sector is not interested in investing. This commitment has great potential for transforming the area, since currently research results are not available and public funded research is only driven by scientists. The government self-assessment does not contain any information about this commitment, and it is unclear whether the government has withdrawn it. The IRM researcher recommends this commitment should be continued. In relation to OGP, one of the researches funded by the Ministry of Education is evaluating the satisfaction of the users of e-government in Macedonia. It should be finished by the end of 2013 and could inform the development of the next OGP action plan, in particular, the part related to e-government.
O5.M2. Scientific and Research Co-operation through Internet • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: Minor • Completion: Not started	The commitment aims at the advancement of e-science, but it does not provide information about the current status of e-science, nor does it envisage clear milestones that could be used to measure the implementation of the commitment. It is difficult to assess the potential of this commitment, since stakeholders consulted by the IRM researcher raised concerns that it did not match the current status in the area, making the commitment rather unrealistic. The IRM researcher found that this commitment has not started as planned. The self-assessment report also does not contain any information about this measure, nor are there any reasons provided for omission of this commitment.
O5.M3. Publish Information from the Statistical Office • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: Transformative • Completion: Not started	Currently, access to statistical micro data is possible only for non-commercial and scientific purposes, subject to approval by the State Statistical Office (SSO) and only in their offices. While, there is not much interest to access these types of data, the majority of the requests are being denied, and only a couple of request were approved so far, none in the reporting period. Significant efforts need to be made in order to change the institutional culture of the SSO that envision only non-commercial use of their data. The lack of resources allocated to the SSO is also non-conducive to the envisaged policy reform in the OGP action plan. Overall, the OGP did not influence already existing activities for dissemination of statistical data for scientific purposes. The IRM researcher found that implementation of this commitment has not started. While the self-assessment does not contain any information about this commitment, the State Statistical Office has officially stated in a free access to information request that the implementation has not started.
O6.M1. Available Information about Inspectorates • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: Transformative • Completion: Limited	The information held by various inspectorates is of great importance for citizens and the business community, as it refers to implementation of the legal framework and violations by various public institutions and companies. Such information is of public interest and promotes accountability, especially in a country where there is a weak implementation of the legislation. However, the IRM review found limited progress, as inspectorates scarcely provide information, and only the State Labour Inspectorates provided findings from its activities, illustrating which entities have some violations in the area of labour regulations and labour rights. Furthermore, the data are not provided in an open data format, or updated regularly. This commitment did not start as planned. The self-assessment also does not contain any information about this commitment. However, the OGP focal person attributed delay in the implementation of this commitment to the different capacities of state inspectorates.
O6.M2. Introduce Integrity Systems for Anti-Corruption Policies in Public Administration • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: Moderate • Completion: Limited	Implementation of this commitment could strengthen preventive measures to curb corruption. While the commitment introduces new measures, including e-tools, it should be noted that the implementation of existing legislation has yet to make a concrete impact and that the effectiveness of existing measures has to be improved. Furthermore, the administrative capacity of the relevant institutions remains insufficient. The State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, the Anti-Corruption Unit of the Ministry of Interior, and the State Audit Office remain inadequately staffed and funded. Consulted stakeholders raised concerns that if there is no body responsible for oversight and control of the integrity systems, it would hamper their development into an effective preventive anti-corruption mechanism. The IRM researcher found limitedimplementation of this commitment.

O7.M1. Open Budget Initiative • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: Minor • Completion: Limited	This commitment anticipated publishing state budget information in open-data formats. Until 2012 the annual state budget was not published as open access information. Macedonia was also assessed with low 35 (out of 100) points in the 2012 Open Budget Survey, which was developed by the International Budget Partnership. In regard to the minimum access enabled to budget information, implementation of this measure will be of great benefit. The challenge identified in this regard is greater access to budget information, not merely open access to the adopted budget. Therefore, the promotion of open access and participatory budget development, with due involvement of all stakeholders, including the civil society, will be crucial in the next period. The IRM researcher recommends significant revisions to the commitment to improve the quality of information in the state budget and ensure timely access to budget information in open-data formats.
O7.M2. Public Procurement • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: Minor • Completion: Limited	The first part of the commitment aims to publish tender documents on Electronic Public Procurement System (EPPS, established prior to OGP). The system could be made transparent by publishing information in open format (the second component of this commitment). Currently, information hosted at EPPS's website is not open source information. The bureau relies on the format in which data are submitted to them by various institutions to publish the information. EPPS in its current form can not be transformed in an open data portal, as the data contained at the EPPS and the system have been assessed as high risk. Civil society noted that procurement information is not posted on the official websites of relevant contracting authorities. This is important as the EPPS's website is complex to navigate and only an expert can browse and locate information on public procurements. Going forward, the commitment could focus on amending the legal framework to cover conflicts of interest and to oblige contracting authorities to publish tender documents in open format.
O7.M3. Foreign Assistance and Investments • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: Minor • Completion: Limited	This commitment existed prior to OGP. The commitment does not make clear which problem it tried to solve or how it would move forward the existing government's efforts in the area. Civil society organisations emphasised that it was unclear what progress could be achieved with this OGP commitment. They stressed the lack of clarity on what type of data that will be published in open format and that they were not consulted for the purpose of setting priorities in terms of open source data. Two main challenges remain for this commitment's full implementation: (1) it is important to expand the type and amount of data provided in the unified database and (2) additional efforts are needed in terms of consolidating and opening data on foreign investments, which are currently unavailable to the public.
O8.M1. Opening of Information by Municipalities • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: None • Completion: Not started	Making information held by municipalities available, as envisaged by this commitment, is essential for citizens, since they hold important items related to education, environment, transport, and the like. However, there is a big gap in resources, financial, human, and administrative, that would ensure access to such data. The decentralization process that was initiated in 2002 aimed at tackling this gap; however, municipalities still face major difficulties in managing their competences. Therefore, significant efforts and resources are needed in order to ensure implementation of this commitment, which were not invested in the reporting period.
O8.M2. Free Access to Information Training for Local Self-Government Officials • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: Moderate • Completion: Limited	This commitment existed prior to OGP as an obligation under the Law on Free Access to Public Information. The second part of the obligation for training secretaries of the municipalities is an added value to raise knowledge and awareness of the officials at the local level for implementation of the Law on Free Access to Information. The manner in which this commitment is envisioned in the action plan could contribute to an increase in funds to support the operations of the Commission for Law on Free Access to Public Information. This will contribute to addressing the challenge faced by the commission concerning the training of newly appointed information mediation officers at information holders who are replacing officers who have already been trained. Overall, it is necessary to expand the scope and coverage of this commitment, to support citizens' concern and raise citizens' awareness on the right to access information, as well as the OGP in general.

✪O8.M3. Integrity System on Local Level • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: Moderate • Completion: Substantial	It is certain that the integrity system introduced in Macedonia addresses the biggest weakness of integrity approaches taken in the region: failure to include a monitoring and evaluation system. And while it is still early to assess the effects of this commitment, social accountability tools might be helpful in quantification of the results so far. Some of the challenges identified by stakeholders include resistance; lack of information and knowledge of possible actions; different understanding of the legal framework; principles of good governance; and great incoherence within institutional answers. While the commitment's implementation is in an advanced phase, the IRM researcher found that there is imbalance in the funding of activities, which are disproportionately (solely) funded by foreign donors through UNDP. Going forward, it is crucial that the commitment describes the anticipated problems and defines clear activities, milestones, and timeframe for addressing them.
O9.M1. Promotion of Consumer Information • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: Minor • Completion: Limited	The OGP action plan could significantly move forward the practice of the government of the bodies responsible for consumer protection; however, so far the practice has remained at the level prior to OGP. The IRM researcher found limited progress on this commitment. The government in its self-assessment report does not provide information about progress in the implementation of this measure. Consulted stakeholders also did not have any information about the progress, but they felt that overall there is lack of information regarding consumer protection, claimed that the level of consumer awareness is low, and complained that the Organization for Consumers' Protection lacks trust and presence in the public. CSOs also raised the concern that the available information is provided only in the Macedonian language, which is insufficient for the country since a large minority speaks the Albanian language.
O9.M2. Availability of Information Related to Road Safety, AirQuality, Safety of Workers • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: Minor • Completion: Limited	Information about air quality is regularly published by the Ministry for Environmental Protection and Urban Planning, but this information is not available in open format or searchable, and data on traffic accidents is also not released on a regular basis. The Republic Council on Road Traffic Safety does not release any data or publish an annual report on their work available for 2012. Information about safety of workers is also not available, either on the Ministry of Economy or the State Labour Inspectorate. The IRM researcher found that the inspectorate has not published any information regarding the safety of workers. CSO consultations raised questions about the suitability of the responsible institution for this commitment, many of which are not listed as supporting institutions in the OGP action plan. The IRM researcher found no evidence that suggests harmonisation of the regulatory information was achieved. Overall, this commitment has not positively influenced the accessibility and quantity of available information in the area of road safety, air quality, or worker safety.
O9.M3. Public Health Information • OGP Value Relevance: Clear • Potential Impact: None • Completion: Complete	The introduction of legal reforms in public health significantly contributed to the identification and widening of the scope of health information and health-related data collected in the country. However, the implementation is delayed, and consulted CSOs suggested that due to lack of capacity and resources, the country should consider prioritising information and gradual introduction of the reforms in terms of health statistics collection. CSOs pointed to the good example of participatory decision making throughout the implementation of the reforms led by Ministry of Health, that has been stalled from 2012, but it could serve as a great basis for further participatory processes in this area. Implementation of new legal and policy reform could significantly advance national efforts in this area. Going forward, the Institute for Public Health of the Republic of Macedonia, which is the authorized holder of the health statistics from the health records, should be involved in the OGP process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Republic of Macedonia implemented numerous activities for improving the efficiency and transparency of state institutions; enhancing the transparency and access to information; fighting against corruption; and providing high level quality services to citizens and businesses through usage of technology and innovations. However, the first OGP action plan was not built on consultations and discussions with multiple stakeholders, and there was an evident lack of enthusiasm among civil society about the OGP and its potential. Based on the challenges and findings identified in this report, this section presents the principal recommendations.

1. **Raising Awareness:** Increase visibility of OGP among relevant stakeholders, and ensure co-operation and collaboration among CSOs to create an environment for voicing concerns and exploring OGP initiatives as an advocacy tool. Make available in advance the information on the process of consultation for OGP processes.
2. **Commitments Ambition:** Adopt commitments that stretch government practice beyond reforms that existed prior to OGP. The next action plan should provide information on the state of implementation of the commitment, especially the achievements.
3. **OGP Institutional Framework:** Establish a multi-stakeholder forum for continuous and genuine consultations with stakeholders, including organisations outside the capital and those representing various minority groups. The forum should enable greater consultation and participation at the institution level and improve the communication efforts towards potential stakeholders.
4. **Guarantee the Freedom of Expression, the Freedom of Media, and the Freedom of Assembly:** Unfortunately, the right to freedom of peaceful assembly; the right to expression; and the right to political participation have been deteriorating in the last year, thus limiting the space for civil society in Macedonia. The new action plan presents an opportunity for the government to promote those rights and to ensure its full implementation.

Eligibility Requirements 2012: To participate in OGP, governments must demonstrate commitment to open government by meeting minimum criteria on key dimensions of open government. Third-party indicators are used to determine country progress on each of the dimensions. For more information, visit http://www.opengovpartnership.org/how-it-works/how-join/eligibility-criteria. Raw data has been recoded by OGP staff into a four-point scale, listed in parentheses below.

Budget Transparency: Executive Budget and Audit Report	(4 of 4)	**Access to Information:** Enacted	(4 of 4)
Asset Disclosure: Elected official to parliament only	(3 of 4)	**Civic Participation:** 7.94 of 10	(4 of 4)

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The Open Government Partnership (OGP) aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism assesses development and implementation of national action plans to foster dialogue among stakeholders and improve accountability.

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I. BACKGROUND

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a voluntary, multi-stakeholder international initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to their citizenry to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. In pursuit of these goals, OGP provides an international forum for dialogue and sharing among governments, civil society organizations, and the private sector, all of which contribute to a common pursuit of open government. OGP stakeholders include participating governments as well as civil society and private sector entities that support the principles and mission of OGP.

Introduction

Macedonia officially began participating in OGP in August 2011 when Nikola Poposki, minister of foreign affairs, declared the government's intent to join.

To participate in OGP, governments must exhibit a demonstrated commitment to open government by meeting a set of minimum performance criteria on key dimensions of open government that are particularly consequential for increasing government responsiveness, strengthening citizen engagement, and fighting corruption. Indicators produced by organizations other than OGP to determine the extent of country progress on each of the dimensions, with points awarded as described below. Macedonia entered into the partnership exceeding the minimal requirements for eligibility. At the time of joining, the country received a high score for Open Budgets (4 out of a possible 4),[1] and a high score of based on its access to information law[2](4 out of a possible 4),a score of 3 out of 4 in Asset Disclosure for Senior Officials based on the limited presentation of assets of elected officials to the Parliament only,[3] and a score of 7.94 out of a possible 10 on the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index Civil Liberties subscore.[4]

All OGP participating governments must develop OGP country action plans that elaborate concrete commitments over an initial two-year period. Governments should begin their action plans by sharing existing efforts related to a set of five "grand challenges," including specific open government strategies and ongoing programs. (See Section 4 for a list of grand challenge areas.) Action plans should then set out each government's OGP commitments, which stretch government practice beyond its current baseline with respect to the relevant grand challenge. These commitments may build on existing efforts, identify new steps to complete ongoing reforms, or initiate action in an entirely new area.

Macedonia developed its national action plan from January through April 2012. The effective start date for the action plan submitted in April was officially 1 July 2012 for implementation through 2014 and 2015. It published its self-assessment in September 2013. According to the OGP schedule,[5] officials and civil society members are to revise the first plan or develop a new plan by April 2014, with consultation beginning January 2014.

Pursuant to OGP requirements, the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) of OGP partnered with an experienced, independent local researcher to carry out an evaluation of the development and implementation of the country's first action plan. In Macedonia, Neda Korunovska, President at Reactor—Research in Action, a non-partisan think tank based in Skopje[6], authored this progress report. It is the aim of the IRM to inform ongoing dialogue around development and implementation of future commitments in each OGP participating country.

Institutional Context

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) co-ordinated Macedonia's initial involvement in the OGP.[7]Following information submitted by the MFA to the government concerning the necessary steps for joining, the government decided to transfer the co-ordination of the implementation of OGP to the Ministry for Information Society and Administration (MISA).[8]While MFA suggested establishing an inter-ministerial working group, composed of relevant ministries and agencies, civil society, and business, for preparation of an OGP action plan, such a working group was not established until mid-2012. MISA, supported by the World Bank, developed the first action plan. While other ministries and responsible authorities were invited to participate, their involvement was limited, even for institutions directly responsible for particular commitments. MISA coordinates the implementation of OGP and is the focal contact for Macedonia.

Macedonia's participation in OGP took place as the public sector continued to reform structural processes and institutions, which included a strong commitment to open government reforms and e-government. In 2010, the government adopted a three-year National Strategy for E-Government,[9] followed by a Strategy for E-Inclusion, adopted in 2011.[10]However, the implementation pace is stalled due to the domestic political dynamics. Where the initiative corresponds with EU integration reforms the implementation is more effective as compared with other areas.[11] Many of the action plan commitments were established prior to OGP, as part of these ongoing reform processes. Legally, MISA had a wide mandate,[12] with its principal responsibilities close to the OGP values:

1. Developing and promoting the information society, as well as monitoring ICT and introducing international standards

2. Integrating information and communications networks; databases; interconnection and exchange of information security aspects; and infrastructure development of the state bodies, legal entities, and other persons to whom the law confers public authority
3. Reforming the public administration, including preparing strategic documents for the efficient and effective operation, training, and professional development of civil servants and public officials, organizing, and conducting training
4. Providing regulatory supervision

However, MISA does not have legal power to enforce or co-ordinate policy change, except in the areas related to the management of human resources in the administration. This led to various challenges that were faced by MISA within the context of OGP. Legally, MISA had to provide information on the status of OGP to the government, and by government's conclusion, responsible authorities were obliged to comply with the action plan.[13]However, MISA sometimes faced difficulties co-ordinating OGP implementation due to a large number of ministries and institutions involved in the action plan.

Methodological Note

The IRM report builds on existing work by government and civil society in assessing and carrying out OGP activities. It attempts to include as wide a range of relevant voices as possible. The IRM researcher reviewed the government's first national action plan[14]and self-assessment of the first action plan process,[15]gathered the views of civil society and business sector, and interviewed appropriate government officials and other stakeholders. OGP staff and a panel of experts reviewed the report. Government was also given an opportunity to comment, provide additional information, and identify factual errors prior to publication. To gather the voices of multiple stakeholders, the IRM researcher organized two stakeholder forums (hereon, IRM consultation forums) in

Skopje, which were formatted as a focus group and group interview, respectively. The IRM researcher, supported by local civil society research organisation Reactor, also conducted an online survey on OGP targeting civil society, of which 54 responses were gathered. The IRM researcher also reviewed two key documents prepared by the government: Macedonia's first action plan[16]and the self-assessment published by the government in September 2013. Further, the Open Society Foundation, Macedonia, carried out an independent assessment of the OGP action plan implementation in October 2013.[17] The Center for Research and Policy Making also promoted a baseline research on OGP in October 2013.[18]Additionally, official responses on the status of the implementation of the OGP, ensured through free access to information requests sent by civil society, are available online.[19]Numerous references are made to these documents, and the reader is encouraged to review them to put this report in context. Methods and sources are dealt with more completely in the Annex of this report.

[1] Open Budget Partnership, *Open Budgets Change Lives* (Washington, DC: Open Budget Partnership, 2012). http://bit.ly/1eBIabX

[2] http://www.right2info.org/laws/constitutional-provisions-laws-and-regulations#macedonia

[3] Simeon Djankov, Rafael La Porta, Florencio Lopez-de-Silanes, and Andrei Shleifer, "Disclosure by Politicians," (Tuck School of Business Working Paper 2009-60, 2009): http://bit.ly/19nDEfK; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), "Types of Information Decision Makers Are Required to Formally Disclose, and Level Of Transparency," in *Government at a Glance 2009*, (OECD, 2009). http://bit.ly/13vGtqS; Ricard Messick, "Income and Asset Disclosure by World Bank Client Countries" (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2009). http://bit.ly/1cIokyf

[4] Economist Intelligence Unit, "Democracy Index 2010: Democracy in Retreat" (London: Economist, 2010). Available at: http://bit.ly/eLC1rE

[5] Open Government Partnership calendar, http://bit.ly/1gHJxrM

[6] More about Reactor – Research in Action can be found at: http://reactor.org.mk

[7] Mihajlo Zevairovski, Directorate for Multilateral Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Interview, 29 October 2013.

[8] Government of the Republic of Macedonia. 2012. Government's conclusion following Information about activities towards Becoming Full Member of the Open Government Initiative. 46th Government Session, held on 12.02.2012, according to an interview with Mr. Zevairovski, MFA.

[9] Government of the Republic of Macedonia. 2010. National Strategy for E-Government 2010-2012. MISA:http://www.mioa.gov.mk/files/pdf/dokumenti/Strategija_za_e-Vlada-05.03.2010.pdf [In Macedonian]

[10] Government of the Republic of Macedonia. 2011. National Strategy for E-Inclusion 2011-2014. MISA:http://www.mioa.gov.mk/files/pdf/dokumenti/Strategija_za_e-vklucuvanje.pdf[In Macedonian]

[11]Assessment by the Center for Research and Policy Making. 2013 "Open Government Mapping Report" http://bit.ly/JLSipI

[12] Articles 13 and 26a, Law on Organization and Operation of the State Administration, Published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No.58/2000

[13] Irena Bojadzieva, OGP Focal Person, MISA, Interview, 4 October 2013.

[14] http://bit.ly/1bhyHaz

[15] Government of Republic of Macedonia. 2013. "Self-Assessment of the Implementation of Action Plan". Skopje: Ministry of Information Society and Administration. http://bit.ly/18ABVHC [in Macedonian]

[16] Government of Republic of Macedonia. 2012. "Macedonia's OGP Action Plan". Skopje: Government of the Republic of Macedonia. http://bit.ly/1le9XDy

[17] Open Society Foundation – Macedonia. 2013 "Opinion on the Implementation of Measures Anticipated in the OGP Action Plan of the Government of Macedonia." http://bit.ly/MB9A9S [in English and Macedonian]

[18] Center for Research and Policy Making. 2013 "Open Government Mapping Report" http://bit.ly/JLSipI

[19] Right to Know portal [http://spinfo.org.mk/index.php?lang=mk] contains over 4.000 answers from information holders received through the law on free access to information, requested by civil society. The database contains replies to requests on the status of the implementation of the OGP Action Plan filed in July 2013 to all responsible authorities.

II. PROCESS: DEVELOPMENT OF ACTION PLAN

In Macedonia, the process of consultation was largely at the agency level, focused on open data, and invited representatives from business, academia, and civil society that work on open data. No details about the process of consultation or specific timelines were made available prior to consultations.

Countries participating in OGP follow a set process for consultation during development of their OGP action plan. According to the OGP Articles of Governance, countries must:

- Make the details of their public consultation process and timeline available (online at minimum) prior to the consultation
- Consult widely with the national community, including civil society and the private sector; seek out a diverse range of views and; make a summary of the public consultation and all individual written comment submissions available online
- Undertake OGP awareness raising activities to enhance public participation in the consultation
- Consult the population with sufficient forewarning and through a variety of mechanisms—including online and through in-person meetings—to ensure the accessibility of opportunities for citizens to engage.

A fifth requirement, during consultation, is set out in the OGP Articles of Governance. This requirement is dealt with in the section "III: Consultation during implementation":

- Countries are to identify a forum to enable regular multi-stakeholder consultation on OGP implementation—this can be an existing entity or a new one.

This is dealt with in the next section, but evidence for consultation both before and during implementation is included here and in Table 1 for ease of reference.

Table 1: Action Plan Consultation Process

Phase of Action Plan	OGP Process Requirement (Articles of Governance Section)	Did the government meet this requirement
During Development	Timeline and process: Prior availability	No
	Advance notice	Yes
	Advance notice: Days	3
	Advance notice: Adequacy	No
	Awareness-raising activities	See narrative
	Awareness-raising activities: Links	Only via or on email
	Online consultations	Yes
	Online consultations: Link	https://e-demokratija.mk
	In-person consultations	Yes
	Summary of comments	No
During Implementation	Regular forum	No

Advance Notice of Consultation

The process for public consultations and its timeline were not available prior to the consultations. In interviews, government officials observed that placing notifications on a web portal (e-democracy.mk) is sufficient and covers all interested parties, while stakeholders at consultations stressed that forewarning notices and means of communication (having in mind low levels of usage of the portal) were not adequate. They suggested that other methods of communication that are better utilized could improve the consultation processes and be more adequate.[1]

Quality and Breadth of Consultation

The government presented a draft action plan in a public consultation in March 2012 when the action plan was also made available on the e-democracy portal. Stakeholders raised concerns that the consultations were focused specifically on the issue of open data. In this sense, Ministry of Information Society and Administration invited representatives from the business sector, academia, and mostly IT-related CSOs. No representatives from other branches of government participated.

Interviewed civil society organisations (CSOs) that participated in the consultation stated that some of the main points included that open government and open data are not just IT issues but are also related to institution management, legal framework, and transparency of government. However, the latter issues were ignored. In this respect, further advancement of active citizen participation by development of trust among all stakeholders and raising awareness among the population were identified as crucial. However, since there is no record of who was present at the consultations, what was discussed, and whether there had been any contributions, it is not clear how structured and meaningful these consultations were for the development of the action plan.

Following the public presentation of the action plan, in March 2012, the government allowed only a few days for written contributions. While the timeframe did not allow for genuine engagement by a number of organisations, a few CSOs submitted written comments. Contributions to the action plan or summary from the consultative process were not available; stakeholders were also largely excluded from the decision-making processes on commitment inclusion or action areas. However, both government officials and stakeholders stressed that many of the written comments were incorporated in the adopted action plan. Furthermore, after the Macedonian government sent the letter of interest to join OGP, CSOs sent letters of support and willingness to participate in the process to develop the OGP national action plan. However, in spite of their expressed interest, the CSOs complained that they were not involved in the process from the beginning and were only able to contribute at the final stage of the development of the action plan.[2]

Awareness raising

Limited awareness raising activities were undertaken prior to the development of the action plan. Namely, the government was assisted by the World Bank, Skopje office, that organised two meetings, one in February and one in March 2012, to facilitate peer learning between Macedonian representatives and leading experts from Brazil, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Moldova in preparing national open government action plans and open budget. However, the participation was limited to a very small number of representatives from the business sector, academia, and CSOs, and participants expressed concern that open data as an issue was disproportionately emphasized, compared to other OGP values.

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1 For example, a widely used list server for communication among CSOs in the country, facilitated through the EU funded project for technical assistance for civil society organizations [tacso.org]

2 IRM researcher interview with Dance Danilovska Bajdevska Open Society Foundation – Macedonia. 2013 "Opinion on the Implementation of Measures Anticipated in the OGP Action Plan of the Government of Macedonia." http://bit.ly/MB9A9S [in English and Macedonian]

III. PROCESS: CONSULTATION DURING IMPLEMENTATION

In Macedonia, the consultation process during the implementation of the action plan can be described as narrow. A multi-agency working group was established to promote greater consultation and to reach out to civil society; however, no multi-stakeholder forum was established for consultation on the implementation of the action plan.

As part of their participation in Open Government Partnership (OGP), governments commit to identify a forum to enable regular multi-stakeholder consultation on OGP implementation—this can be an existing entity or a new one. This section summarizes that information.

Consultation Process

No multi-stakeholders forums were held during implementation of the action plan, and apart from the Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA) no other responsible agency held consultations or informative sessions.

The government did not create meaningful, diverse, and broad consultations during the implementation of the action plan. A multi-agency working group was established, but it met only twice and did not manage to serve as a co-ordinating body or promote greater consultation in order to reach civil society and the business sector. While the government concluded that members of civil society and business sector should participate in the working group, representation from members from these two groups was not ensured during the first year of implementation of the action plan.

MISA officials stated that they had used various forums and events to promote open data. A total of four public events were held in the first year, where information on OGP was shared, along with the promotion of open data that mainly focused on debate about the potential for economic growth based on data made available by the government. Two of the events were held with students of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), one with the ICT Chamber, and one with the World Bank. Other than those informative sessions, no other consultations were held during the implementation. The types of stakeholders informed were determined by the position and functions of the MISA and were limited to their usual clients (i.e., small groups of businesses, academia, and civil society working on ICT). While utilising narrow, specialised, and technical participation might be beneficial for implementation of specific commitments, it poses a challenge of exclusivity and of representing only those selected by the ministry.

Fifty-four CSO representatives responded to the IRM researcher's online survey[1] about consultations during the implementation. None of the respondents reported being involved or consulted, and some even expressed concern that the action plan was over ambitious. They believed this because the administration did not have capacity to implement it due to lack of financial and human resources and also because it lacked data and information. While the engagement of CSOs and businesses was discussed during IRM consultation forums, stakeholders interviewed had no, or very limited, awareness of the plan. They raised concerns that since the World Bank facilitated the process at the beginning, it may have strongly influenced the selection of priorities, which are currently technical with a focus on open data.

Lack of awareness about OGP might be a reason for the lack of CSO strategies to intervene and push for a more inclusive process and promote shared expectations from OGP. While the OGP initiative puts civil society and the business sector upfront and creates opportunity for greater involvement, it has not seized this opportunity and agreed on common priorities. Substantial efforts will be needed in order to move from information to consultation to collaboration in order to reach a co-decision on OGP implementation. There is a mutual understanding between the government and the stakeholders that there should be more systematic, regular, and continual dialogue and consultations in the future. The possibility of including civil society and business sector representatives in the working group, as well as establishing a platform for more meaningful and active engagement, should be considered and jointly decided. A special emphasis should be given to reaching out to representatives beyond the capital.

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[1] The survey was sent to a list of over 1.400 CSOs, through list server commonly used by CSOs for sharing information in the country, which is administered by EU funded project [http://tacso.org]

IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMITMENTS

All OGP participating governments develop OGP country action plans that elaborate concrete commitments over an initial two-year period. Governments begin their OGP country action plans by sharing existing efforts related to their chosen grand challenge(s), including specific open government strategies and ongoing programmes. Action Plans then set out governments' OGP commitments, which stretch government practice beyond its current baseline with respect to the relevant policy area. These commitments may build on existing efforts, identify new steps to complete on-going reforms, or initiate action in an entirely new area.

OGP commitments are to be structured around a set of five "grand challenges" that governments face. OGP recognizes that all countries are starting from different baselines. Countries are charged with selecting the grand challenges and related concrete commitments that most relate to their unique country contexts. No action plan, standard, or specific commitments are to be forced on any country.

The five OGP grand challenges are:

1. **Improving Public Services**—measures that address the full spectrum of citizen services including health, education, criminal justice, water, electricity, telecommunications, and any other relevant service areas by fostering public service improvement or private sector innovation.
2. **Increasing Public Integrity**—measures that address corruption and public ethics, access to information, campaign finance reform, and media and civil society freedom.
3. **More Effectively Managing Public Resources**—measures that address budgets, procurement, natural resources, and foreign assistance.
4. **Creating Safer Communities**—measures that address public safety, the security sector, disaster and crisis response, and environmental threats.
5. **Increasing Corporate Accountability**—measures that address corporate responsibility on issues such as the environment, anti-corruption, consumer protection, and community engagement.

While the nature of concrete commitments under any grand challenge area should be flexible and allow for each country's unique circumstances, OGP commitments should be relevant to OGP values laid out in the OGP Articles of Governance and Open Government Declaration signed by all OGP participating countries. The IRM uses the following guidance to evaluate relevance to core open government values:

- **Access to information - T**hese commitments:

    o pertain to government-held information;
    o are not restricted to data but pertains to all information;
    o may cover proactive or reactive releases of information;
    o may pertain to strengthen the right to information; and
    o must provide open access to information (it should not be privileged or internal only to government).
- **Citizen Participation** — governments seek to mobilise citizens to engage in public debate, provide input, and make contributions that lead to more responsive, innovative and effective governance. Commitments around access to information:

- o open up decision-making to all interested members of the public; such forums are usually "top-down" in that they are created by government (or actors empowered by government) to inform decision-making;
  - o often include elements of access to information to ensure meaningful input of interested members of the public into decisions;
  - o often include the enhancing citizens' right to be heard, but do not necessarily include the right to be heeded.

- **Accountability —** there are rules, regulations, and mechanisms in place that call upon government actors to justify their actions, act upon criticisms or requirements made of them, and accept responsibility for failure to perform with respect to laws or commitments.

  - o As part of open government, such commitments have an "open" element, meaning that they are not purely internal systems of accountability without a public face.

- **Technology and Innovation** — Commitments for technology and innovation

  - o promote new technologies offer opportunities for information sharing, public participation, and collaboration.
  - o Should make more information public in ways that enable people to both understand what their governments do and to influence decisions;
  - o May commit to supporting the ability of governments and citizens to use tech for openness and accountability; and
  - o May support the use of technology by government employees and citizens alike.

Countries may focus their commitments at the national, local and/or subnational level—wherever they believe their open government efforts are to have the greatest impact.

Recognizing that achieving open government commitments often involves a multiyear process, governments should attach timeframes and benchmarks to their commitments that indicate what is to be accomplished each year, wherever possible.

This section details each of the commitments Macedonia included in its initial action plan. Macedonia's OGP action plan consists of thirty-five individual commitments grouped under the following nine objectives: (1)participatory policy-making; (2)open data; (3)improved electronic services and procedures; (4)improved implementation of Freedom of Information Act; (5)stimulation of the scientific-research activity with the easy-to-access-information; (6)prevention and suppression of corruption and promotion of the good governance principles; (7)efficient public resource management; (8)open information on local level; and (9)protection of consumers and of the citizens—users of services and rights. Different commitments and measures are cited in the report referring to the objective under which they are implemented.[1]

A number of the commitments have a single milestone, while others have multiple milestones. In these latter cases, the milestones have been evaluated together on a single fact sheet in order to avoid repetition and to make reading easier for OGP stakeholders.

While most indicators given on each commitment fact sheet are self-explanatory, a number of indicators for each commitment deserve further explanation.

- Relevance: The IRM researcher evaluated each commitment for its relevance to OGP Values and OGP Grand Challenges.
    - OGP values: Some OGP commitments are unclear in their relationship to OGP values. In order to identify such cases, the IRM researcher made a judgment based on a close reading of the commitment text. This identifies commitments that can better articulate their relationship to fundamental issues of openness.
    - Grand challenges: While some commitments may be relevant to more than one grand challenge, the reviewer only marked those that had been identified by government (as almost all commitments address a grand challenge).
- Ambition:
    - *Potential impact:* OGP countries are expected to make ambitious commitments (with new or pre-existing activities) that stretch government practice beyond an existing baseline. To contribute to a broad definition of ambition, the IRM researcher judged how potentially transformative commitment might be in the policy area. This is based on researcher's findings and experience as a public policy expert.
    - *New or pre-existing:* The IRM researcher also recorded, in a non-judgmental fashion whether a commitment was based on an action that pre-dated the action plan.
- Timing:
    - *Projected completion:* The OGP Articles of Governance encourage countries to put forth commitments with clear deliverables with suggested annual milestones. In cases where this is information is not available, the IRM researcher makes a best judgment, based on the evidence of how far the commitment could possibly be at the end of the period assessed.

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1 For example O4M3 stands for objective 4, measure 3 from the OGP action plan.

O1.M1: ENER On Line Participatory Tool In Legislation Drafting; 1)Publishing Draft Laws; 2)ENER Usage Data

Greater usage of ENER by the business, chambers, civil society and the citizens. Increase public awareness and usage of participatory tools.

1. Every Ministry that is proposing a law will publish on its website the beginning of the process of adoption of the law and this announcement will also include the link to ENER.

2. The Ministry of Information Society and Administration will make a comparison of the overall visits to the ENER with the previous period. If there is a need, additional measures will be proposed for its promotion and use.

Commitment Description						
Answerability	**Lead institution**	Ministry of Information Society and Administration				
	Supporting institutions	All ministries				
	Point of contact specified?	No				
Specificity and measurability		Medium (Commitment language describes an activity that is objectively verifiable, but does not contain specific milestones or deliverables)				
Relevance	**OGP grand challenges**	N/A				
	OGP Values	**Access to Information**	**Civic Participation**	**Accountability**	**Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.**	**None**
			√			

Ambition	
New vs. Pre-existing	**Potential Impact**
Pre-existing	Moderate (the commitment is a major step forward in the relevant policy area, but remains limited in scale or scope)

Level of Completion		
Start date: 7/12	**Actual completion**	Substantial
End date: 12/2012	**Projected completion**	Complete

Next Steps
Further work on existing implementation

What happened?

The IRM researcher found substantial implementation of this commitment.

The Single Electronic Register of Regulations (ENER)[1]was introduced in January 2009 as a tool for consultation with stakeholders within the process of drafting legislation. It enables citizens, civil society, and business community to submit electronic comments and suggestions directly to the relevant institutions before the draft legislation is adopted. While it was legally binding[2] to have upto 30 days for consultations on ENER, before OGP this was not a general practice. As reported by the government, this was achieved by strengthening requirements for publication of the proposed legislation.[3] There was a significant increase in the number of visits to ENER and the numbers of documents published.[4]

However, the four biggest challenges raised by stakeholders during IRM consultations were

1. lack of feedback to provided comments;
2. shortage of information about the timeframe for consultations;
3. inconsistency in the updating of the status of the legislation; and
4. complexity of the design of the interface.

The IRM researcher could not find a report on the website that included reasoning for not accepting remarks and proposals, reports that were mandatory to publish on the website.[5]Furthermore, the website does not display closing dates of consultation processes. This, coupled with inaccuracy of the status of some legislative proposals, means that stakeholders may think that certain legislation is open for consultation, while in reality it has already been adopted.[6]

On the other hand, in the second half of 2012, ENER underwent significant changes in order to improve its functionality. The Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA) identified the difficulties in the operation, and since it was supported by USAID, the system was significantly changed, addressing about 40 weaknesses (lack of feedback mechanism of the system, limited opportunities for comments, the failure to specify recipients of generated content, improper forwarding of requests from the public, lack of opportunity to subscribe to specific areas of interest by users, as well as introducing a monitoring and tracking system for comments by users).[7]The changes in the system are substantial, but civil society organisations were not aware of the changesmade. Additionally, the government, supported by theOrganization for Security and Co-operation for Europe (OSCE) mission to Skopje has produced a Guidelines for Providing Effective Feedback to the Public Regarding the Outcomes in the Law Making Process in 2013, coupled with two trainings for civil servants, which covered approximately 40 participants.

The government reported the increase in visits to ENER, but it notes that there is a great discrepancy in interest for different legislative proposals. It is unclear whether the current use is at satisfactory levels, while MISA plans and implements measures for its promotion.

Did it matter?

While this commitment existed before OGP, its inclusion in the OGP action plan made it possible for both civil society and government to monitor its progress on a regular basis. And while there is increased access to information on draft legislation, the evidence suggests low levels of use of the data by stakeholders.

The principal shortcomings that remain and that were raised at the IRM stakeholders' forum are the following:

1. The draft legislation is provided for comments in its final stage, and ENER does not provide opportunities for involvement at earlier phases, such as evaluating alternative solutions or defining policy problems.
2. Civil society organisations feel that there is a lack of genuine consultation, that substantial comments are not taken into consideration, and that only technical comments are accepted.
3. There is a lack of campaigning to raise awareness both among civil servants and civil society about the opportunities and usage of ENER, thus hampering its potential.

And while there were some efforts to train, both civil society and civil servants,[8]ensuring that all responsible ministries provide information on time and

respond to online consultations poses a significant challenge. CSOs monitoring reports point to this challenge by documenting responses from ministries in which they state that "the competence for up-dating and following ENER falls under MISA"[9] or conclude that "not all Ministries publish their draft legislation in the registry, nor is there evidence of a public consultation report being made to date."[10] Government officials responded that while the institutional mechanism strengthened the implementation, it cannot monitorand assess the implementation because it does not have access to the list of legislative acts adopted by Parliament. This is necessary to evaluate whether there is a full compliance by all institutions in the use of ENER. A final weakness is that the data were not at all easy to access. Aside from difficulties navigating the website in order to find data, the website also presents data in closed formats and searching data assumes knowledge of the specific title of the document needed.

Overall, the single Electronic Register of Legislation is being used more consistently and provides for a greater access to information within legislative process, thus providing opportunities for monitoring and advocating efforts of civil society. Furthermore, ENER provides a tool to submit commentary on draft legislation, and while it is not clear whether these comments influence policy, this is a significant effort in the spirit of OGP. However, there is a need for a genuine and consistent approach to public participation in decisionmaking, including appropriate institutional mechanisms.[11]

Moving forward

The IRM researcher recommends further work on existing implementation. While there is a progress in the implementation, significant issues need to be addressedfurther in order to achieve intended goals. Namely, the government should

1. improve technical capability and align all relevant institutions in consistent use of Single Electronic Register of Regulations (ENER);[12]
2. extend the coverage of ENER to delegated secondary legislation;
3. ensure that public comments are taken into consideration and feedback from consultations is publishedtimely; and
4. raise awareness among civil society, business, and public administration about the possibilities offered by ENER.

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[1] http://ener.gov.mk/

[2] Government of the Republic of Macedonia [Guidelines for the Work of the Ministries in Involving Stakeholders in the Process of Legislation Drafting], published in the Official Gazette No.150, 2011 (In Macedonian)

[3] Government of the Republic of Macedonia, Annual report on the implementation of the Action Plan on Open Government Partnership, September 2013

[4] Ibid, from the establishing of ENER in January 2009 to June 2012, total of 25,122 visits were registered. This number has more than doubled (additional 58,589 visits) between July 2012 and September 2013

[5] Guidelines 2011, article 9

[6] For example, the Law on Mediation is classified as "open for consultation", while it has already been adopted by the Government and sent to the Parliament

[7] Interview, Kapital, [ENER Ensures All Interested Stakeholders to Influence Legislation Making], 2 December 2012, http://bit.ly/1hE5YhT (In Macedonian)

[8] Mainly the trainings were funded by foreign donor assistance.

[9] Foundation Open Society - Macedonia, Opinion on the Implementation of Measures Anticipated in the Open Government Partnership Action Plan of the Republic of Macedonia, October 2013

[10] Center for Research and Policy Making, Open Government Partnership Mapping Report, November 2013

[11] EC, Progress Report, 2012

[12] Where necessary for implementation of legislative acts, the Parliament in the adopted acts delegates the power to make secondary legislation to defined subjects (usually limited to procedural and format issues) to named authorities (usually ministers).

O1.M2: www.e-demokratija.gov.mk - On Line Tool For Participatory Policy Making

Increase public awareness and usage of participatory policy making through the e-democracy web portal by the institutions, business, chambers, civil society and the citizens. Stimulate the participation and interactive initiatives exchange on diverse policy perspective and strategic documents by all interested and contested parties.

Commitment Description						
Answerability	**Lead Institution**	Ministry of Information Society and Administration				
	Supporting Institutions	None specified				
	Point of Contact Specified?	No				
Specificity and Measurability		Medium (Commitment language describes an activity that is objectively verifiable, but does not contain specific milestones or deliverables)				
Relevance	**OGP Grand Challenges**	N/A				
	OGP Values	**Access to Information**	**Civic Participation**	**Accountability**	**Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.**	**None**
			√			

Ambition	
New vs. Pre-existing	**Potential Impact**
Pre-existing	Moderate (the commitment is a major step forward in the relevant policy area, but remains limited in scale or scope)

Level of Completion		
Start date: 7/12	**Actual completion**	Limited
End date: 12/12	**Projected completion**	Complete

Next Steps
Revision of the commitment to be more achievable or measurable

What happened?

The IRM researcher found limited implementation of this commitment. An e-democracy web portal (www.e-demokratija.gov.mk) was established as a mechanism to increase public awareness about participatory policy-making. The online debates and consultations aimed to initiate public policy creation are stimulated through the portal's four components: forum, blog, documents, and the possibility of submitting ideas. The launch of the e-democracy website (March 2012) was used to present publicly the first draft OGP action plan (June 2012). However, the e-democracy website was envisaged as an action as part of the 2010–2012 E-Government Strategy.[1]

The total number of visits in the period between March 2012 and June 2013 was 4,230; the total number of uploaded documents in the same period was 156; and the total number of topics on the forum was 108.[2] Additionally, 201 entities were registered on the website.[3]

Although the statistics related to the usage of the e-democracy website are available, it is questionable whether the current use is at a satisfactory level, and whether such level

of usage can be considered as improved public awareness for participatory policy-making, which is the goal of the commitment. CSOs' monitoring reports question what the Ministry for Information Society and Administration (MISA) understands under public awareness activities (i.e., does it refer to the number of registered entities or the number of policies that will be created in a participative manner through www.e-demokratija.gov.mk?).[4]

During the IRM researcher's consultations with civil society, some stakeholders raised concerns about the growing number of websites for ensuring e-participation They were confused as to why the government was duplicating its efforts, especially since producing multiple websites is inefficient and time consuming.

Did it matter?
The commitment is a step forward for increased public participation, since the website promotes a number of online participatory mechanisms (documents, blog, possibility of submitting ideas, and the forum). However, both the stakeholders and the government made very limited use of this commitment. The limited activity on the website (the blog component contains mainly press releases related to the work of MISA; only three policy ideas were proposed on the website; and few (only eight) comments were left on the 139 forum topics made available by public servants) demonstrates the lack of awareness about the potential of this specific participatory tool.

Moreover, the spectrum of currently available documents coincides with the list of documents that all public institutions are obliged to disclose on their websites in accordance with article 10 of the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Character, which has been in force since 2006. While there are guidelines that should ensure unified application of the particular participatory tool by institutions, and by availability of supporting staff at MISA, due to the great number of institutions that should comply and use e-demokratija in their work, unified and timely implementation of the portal will remain a challenge in the future.

Moving forward
The IRM researcher recommends revision of the commitment in order to make it more achievable and measurable.

Next steps for this commitment might include

1. revision of the commitment by clearly identifying the problem it tries to solve, setting measurable targets, and identifying appropriate activities and milestones;
2. further promotion of the guidelines for application of the www.e-demokratija.gov.mk participatory tool by institutions; and
3. targeted promotion of www.e-demokratija.gov.mk

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[1] Government of the Republic of Macedonia. Annual report on the implementation of the Action Plan on Open Government Partnership. September 2013
[2] Ibid
[3] http://spinfo.org.mk; http://spinfo.org.mk/images/sluchai
[4] Foundation Open Society – Macedonia. October 2013. Opinion on the Implementation of Measures Anticipated in the Open Government Partnership Action Plan of the Republic of Macedonia.

O1.M3: Introduction of Online Petitions

Introduce the possibility for online petitions (online collection of signatures) In order for a particular issue to obtain the status of petition, it must be supported by some number of citizens (for example, 5.000). When the required signatures are collected, the Ministry of Information Society and Administration drafts Information to the Government along with the request which is subject of the petition. The Government conclusion on this matter will be made available to the public. In the same time there will be additional mechanism for collection of the signatures from those people who do not have digital certificates.

Commitment Description

Answerability	**Lead Institution**	Ministry of Information Society and Administration
	Supporting Institutions	None specified
	Point of Contact Specified?	No
Specificity and Measurability		High (Commitment language provides clear, measurable, verifiable milestones for achievement of the goal)

	OGP Grand Challenges	N/A				
Relevance	**OGP Values**	**Access to Information**	**Civic Participation**	**Accountability**	**Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.**	**None**
			√			

Ambition

New vs. Pre-existing	Potential Impact
New	Minor (the commitment is an incremental but positive step in the relevant policy area)

Level of Completion

Start date: 7/12	**Actual completion**	Not started
End date: 12/14	**Projected completion**	Substantial

Next Steps

Further work on basic implementation

What happened?

The IRM researcher found that the implementation of this commitment has not started.

The aim of this commitment was to introduce the possibility for online petitions. In order for a particular issue to obtain the status of a petition, it must be supported by 5,000 citizens through the use of digital certificates. At the same time, there will be additional mechanisms for collecting signatures from people who do not have digital certificates.When the required signatures are collected, the Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA) will send draft information to the government along with the request, which is the subject of the petition. The government conclusion on this matter should be made available to the public. There was no possibility for online petitions before OGP.

While the CSOs were aware that the measure had not been implemented yet, mainly positive comments were shared about the possibility to send online petitions. CSO members saw this as a good way for the government to see what the citizens' opinions are on a particular topic.[1] However, the CSOs fear that the online petition will not be

accessible by everyone since a certificate should be obtained, and the fee for a certificate will not be affordable for everyone. Furthermore, the biggest challenge raised by stakeholders during consultations was the high minimum number of mandatory signatures for a petition to be considered as valid.

The self-assessment does not contain any information about this commitment while the IRM researcher was informed by the representative of MISA that a process was started for analysing the comparative experiences in this field.[2]

Did it matter?
The mainly positive feedback on the idea of introducing an online petition mechanism suggests that the measure could be a step forward for greater public participation if this commitment is implemented in future.

Moving forward
The IRM researcher recommends including this commitment in the next action plan and undertaking further work on its basic implementation. As it works to continue implementation of this commitment, the government should

1. reconsider the minimum number of required signatures;
2. make available to everyone the mechanism for participating in petitions;
3. establish clear rules for proceeding online petitions; and
4. allow petitions to be made available to parliamentary groups that might be willing to propose policies to address the issue raised by the petition.

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[1] Minutes from IRM CSOs consultation process, see http://bit.ly/19C3wpY.
[2] Irena Bojadzieva, MISA, Interview, Skopje, 4 October 2013.

O1.M4: Implementation of the Strategy for Cooperation of the Government with the Civil Society Sector

Implementation of the measures from the Strategy for Cooperation of the Government with the Civil Society Sector 2007-2011 (i.e. 2012-2017). Most of the aspects that are in the interest for cooperation with the NGO sector are introduced as specific objectives in the Strategy. Its implementation would achieve the desire objectives.

Commitment Description						
Answerability	Lead Institution	The General Secretariat of the Government				
	Supporting Institutions	None specified				
	Point of Contact Specified?	No				
Specificity and Measurability		Medium (Commitment language describes an activity that is objectively verifiable, but does not contain specific milestones or deliverables)				
Relevance	OGP Grand Challenges	N/A				
	OGP Values	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Accountability	Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.	None
			√			

Ambition	
New vs. Pre-existing	Potential Impact
Pre-existing	None (the commitment maintains the status quo)

Level of Completion		
Start date: 7/12	Actual completion	Limited
End date: 12/14	Projected completion	Substantial

Next Steps
Further work on basic implementation

What happened?

The IRM researcher found limited implementation of this commitment.

The Macedonian government is currently implementing the second Strategy for Cooperation with the Civil Society Sector. The strategy was adopted in June 2012 and will be implemented between 2012 and 2017. The main strategy objective is to promote, support, and develop partnership between the government and the civil society. This is done through measures for strengthening of mutual co-operation. The strategy's priority areas are

1. developed and sustainable civil society;
2. active participation in the process of European integration and defining policies and laws;
3. economic and social development and cohesion;
4. strengthen civic activism and support from the community; and
5. strengthen institutional and practical framework for co-operation.

The Governmental Division for Cooperation with the Civil Society Sector reported that a number of actions were taken during the reporting period in each of strategy's priority

areas. The attention was put on development and adoption of the plan for implementation of the strategy; provision of capacity building trainings for the appointed public servants for co-operation with the civil society; operability of the commission for granting public interest status to civil society organisations; and inclusion of civil society representatives in co-ordination bodies for implementation of particular projects.[1]The website www.nvosorabotka.gov.mk remains operational and provides for up-to-date information, mainly information related to the consultation process in legislation drafting. The website also provides the annual plans for implementation of the strategy submitted by six out of the fourteenministries in the government.[2]

The government's progress in implementing the second strategy (2012–2017) was assessed as moderate by the European Commission. The weak administrative capacity and the donor dependent provision of training on consulting civil society are among the identified weaknesses. The European Commission further reported that some progress in preparing participatory instruments and methods to involve municipalities, civil society, and the private sector in programming and implementingthe EU funded project is evident.[3] On the other hand, during the IRM stakeholders' consultations, civil society representatives raised concerns about the weak position of the Division for Cooperation with the Civil Society Sector within the government and its lack of power to enforce policy and institutional change over government agencies, as well as its lack of funds for undertaking program activities. Furthermore, they pointed to the need for greater collaboration with the government and suggested that the website (www.nvosorabotka) should not serve only as a source for provision of information, but as a platform for collaboration as well.

Did it matter?
The general public trust in civil society has increased, and for the first time the majority of the population (54.2 percent) holds trust in the civil society sector.[4] Although some progress was made to include civil society in participatory policy-making (see commitment O1M1), the public opinion about the citizens' and ability of CSOs to respond to the opportunities to affect decision making is, however, rather low.[5]

The Division for Cooperation with the Civil Society Sector did not manage to impose the obligation on all government ministries and other relevant public institutions (such as the Ministry of Finance,the Public Revenue Office, and the Ministry for Local Self-Government) that implement measures from the strategy to submit their annual plans for implementation of the Strategy for Government Cooperation with the Civil Society Sector. The ministries that did provide their annual plans for implementing the strategy failed to perform consultations about the annual plans, which is not in accordance with the Plan for Monitoring and Assessment of the Implementation of the Strategy.

The interest among CSOs for registering as an organisation with public interest status remains low; only two organisations requested such status in 2012 and only one was awarded the status.[6] The reason for this is that the fiscal legislation for promoting benefits for those organisations is still not adopted. Overall, OGP has not stretched government's efforts in the implementation of the Strategy for Cooperation with the Civil Society Sector; however, government officials feel that the inclusion in the action plan stimulated an enabling environment,which was needed to ensure better implementation in the future.[7]

Moving forward
The IRM recommends further work on basic implementation. The following steps might be taken for further implementation of the commitment:

1. The Strategy for Cooperation of the Government with the Civil Society Sector should be implemented timely manner and in accordance with the action plan for implementation of the strategy. The government should allocate sufficient resources for this purpose.
2. All relevant public institutions should proceed with the plan for implementation of the Strategy for Cooperation of the Government with the Civil Society Sector;
3. The capacities of the appointed civil servants for communication with the civil society sector should be further strengthen.
4. The government should introduce fiscal measures to stimulate civil society's economic activity and self-sustainability, including reform of the public funding to CSOs.

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[1] Government of the Republic of Macedonia, Secretariat General, Division for Cooperation with the Civil Society Sector. 2013. *Respond letter sent to the Ministry of Information Society and Administration for report on the Divisions' contribution for implementation of the Action Plan*. [In Macedonian]

[2] Government of the Republic of Macedonia, Secretariat General, Division for Cooperation with the Civil Society Sector. 2013. Report on the Implementation of the Measures and Activities from the Strategy for Cooperation with the Civil Society Sector.
[http://www.nvosorabotka.gov.mk/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=15&Itemid=37 in Macedonian]

[3] European Commission. 2013. Progress Report for Macedonia.

[4] Technical Assistance for the Civil Society Project in cooperation with the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation. May-June 2013. [A representative sample survey on the general public trust in the Civil Society Sector]. http://www.tacso.org/documents/reports/?id=9554 [in Macedonian]

[5] Center for Research and Policy making. 2013. Open Government Mapping Report. http://bit.ly/JLSipI

[6] Commission for Organizations with Public Status. 2013. 2012 Annual Report of the Commission for Organizations with Public Status. http://bit.ly/JHrdmZ [in Macedonian]

[7] Suzana Nikodijevic, Division for Cooperation with the Civil Society Sector, Interview, Skopje, 8 November 2013.

O1.M5: Code of Best Practices for NGO Involvement

Improved use of the Code of Best Practices for involvement of the NGO sector in the process of policy making. The Government already adopted this Code and the intention with this measure is to ensure its consistent implementation by all institutions.

Commitment Description		
Answerability **Lead Institution**	The General Secretariat of the Government	
Supporting Institutions	None specified	
Point of Contact Specified?	No	
Specificity and Measurability	Medium (Commitment language describes an activity that is objectively verifiable, but does not contain specific milestones or deliverables)	
Relevance **OGP Grand Challenges**	N/A	

OGP Values	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Accounta bility	Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.	None
		√			

Ambition	
New vs. Pre-existing	**Potential Impact**
Pre-existing	Moderate (the commitment is a major step forward in the relevant policy area, but remains limited in scale or scope)

Level of Completion		
Start date: 1/12	**Actual completion**	Limited
End date: 12/12	**Projected completion**	Complete

Next Steps
None: Abandon commitment

What happened?

The IRM researcher found limited implementation of this commitment.

The Macedonian government adopted the Code of Best Practices for Involvement of the Civil Sector (the code) one year before joining OGP. The action plan envisaged that the implementation of thiscode would improve by the end of 2012. The code is based on the following principles:

1. Improvement of the transparency and accountability by the government and the other state administrative bodies.
2. Improvement of co-operation between the civil sector and government and the other state administrative bodies through regular and structured consultations.
3. Improvement of the quality of the consultative processes in policy-making.

The code promotes use of various instruments for involvement of the civil sector such as interactive websites, use of the Single Electronic Register of Regulations (ENER), conferences, trainings, joint working groups, joint campaigns, and the like.

According to the code, the general secretariat of the government is obliged to assess the implementation of the code every second year. In February 2013 an analysis of the implementation of the code was published for the first time.[1] The analysis was

performed based on the seven responsesto the questionnaire,a questionnaire distributed to the state administrative bodies.[2] The code should be implemented by all (nearly 70) state administrative bodies and the responses from these bodies should have been obtained by the general secretariat.

The IRM researcher, therefore, suggests that the results of the analysis are taken only indicatively and not as an assessment of the current situation. However, the very low response rate to the general secretariat poses questions for the relevancy of the code to the work of the institutions and their willingness to take public consultations seriously.

Still, the analysis showed that the code is applied differently by the seven institutions that responded. Most institutions apply the code in the process of drafting laws, and there are examples of using the code for exchange of experiences, policy-making, and promoting good practices. Only two state administrative bodies involved civil organisations in campaigns.[3] Uneven application of the code is also noticed by the European Commission.[4] They have noted that the system for allocating state funds to civil society has still not been standardised and that the local government lacks sufficient capacity to ensure standardised co-operation and financing of local civil society organisations.

The special provisions defining obligatory public consultations on the draft annual work program of the government are continually implemented. Also the general secretariat provided timely feedback to a civil society sector proposal for public policy. The feedback is published on the website www.nvosorabotka.gov.mk.

Did it matter?

The ambition of this particular commitment is moderate, and it did not stretch government's effort prior to the OGP. Both the civil society sector and the state administrative bodies made very limited use of the commitment's outputs. During the two years of the implementation of the Code of Best Practices for Involvement of the Civil Society Sector only one organisation submitted a proposal to the relevant government ministries. The proposal was considered as justified, but there is no information about its transformation into policy. Also, only five organisations submitted contributions towards the draft annual program for the work of the government. The small number of state administrative bodies (7 out of 70) that provided feedback to the questionnaire, based on which assessment of the implementation of the codes was made, demonstrates little engagement in the particular commitment. Furthermore, an impediment to further improve the co-operation is the lack of trust on the side of citizens that they can influence the work of their governments, both local and national.[5]

The analysis of the implementation of the Code of Best Practices for Involvement of the Civil Society Sector was carried out for the first time in 2013 and served as baseline information about the application of the code. Therefore, the commitment for improved use of the code could not be achieved in 2012, as was envisaged in the OGP action plan.

Moving forward

The IRM recommends this commitment be abandoned. The Code of Best Practices for Involvement of the Civil Society Sector is adopted based on the Law on Associations and Foundations and on the Strategy for Cooperation of the Government with the Civil Society Sector; therefore, the increased use of the code should be implemented in future as part of the commitment for implementation of the strategy(see commitment O1M4).

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[1]This analysis was conducted and published before the two-year period expired. There is no reasoning provided why the assessment was made earlier.

[2] Government of the Republic of Macedonia, Secretariat General, Division for Cooperation with the Civil Society Sector. 2013. [Analysis of the implementation of the Code of Best Practices for Involvement of the Civil Society Sector]. [http://bit.ly/J80Cid in Macedonian]

[3] Government of the Republic of Macedonia. 2013. Annual report on the implementation of the Action Plan on Open Government Partnership. http://bit.ly/1dSnjkN

[4] European Commission. 2013. Progress Report for Macedonia. http://www.sep.gov.mk/en/content/?id=96#.UrrMbPRDvfV

[5] Civic Engagement Surveys conducted in 2012 and 2013 reveal increase in the skepticism among citizens that they have power to influence the work of the governments. Three out of four citizens are skeptical that they can influence the work of the local government compared to four out of five citizens that are discouraged about their possible influence over the work of the national authorities. Detailed analysis of the survey can be accessed at: http://civicengagegment.mk

O2.M1: www.opendata.gov.mk

Establish the www.opendata.gov.mk website. Depending on the model that will be the most appropriate, open data will be put on the website during its development through a direct link to the institution that provides that information, or web catalog will be made which will show the websites from which the open data can be accessed.

Commitment Description						
Answerability	**Lead Institution**	Ministry of Information Society and Administration				
	Supporting Institutions	All information holders				
	Point of contact Specified?	No				
Specificity and Measurability		High (Commitment language provides clear, measurable, verifiable milestones for achievement of the goal)				
Relevance	**OGP Grand Challenges**	N/A				
	OGP Values	**Access to Information**	**Civic Participation**	**Accounta bility**	**Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.**	**None**
		√				
Ambition						
New vs. Pre-existing		**Potential Impact**				
New		Moderate (the commitment is a major step forward in the relevant policy area, but remains limited in scale or scope)				
Level of Completion						
Start date: 7/12		**Actual completion**		Complete		
End date: 12/12		**Projected completion**		Complete		
Next Steps						
New commitment building on existing implementation						

What happened?

IRM found that the implementation of this commitment was completed.

The government has established a new web platform that will ensure one gateway to all open data released by the state institutions at opendata.gov.mk. The web platform is similar to initiatives globally to promote open data. The commitment envisaged two models for the web platform: the first building a web directory, and the second building a platform that links to other public websites; the second model was chosen. Civil society was not included in the evaluation of the models and decision making.[1] Currently, at the portal, links to 21 institutions and 110 data sets are available. Most frequently read data is the registry of financial companies; issued licenses for organisation of games of chance; registered domains by MARnet; assessors from the field of information technologies; adopted and proposed laws; Guide to Customs Clearance of 2013;national register of buildings that represent protected cultural heritage; air quality data;registry of court interpreters; and others.[2]

Did it matter?

Open data is a novelty arising from the initiative for Open Government Partnership, and as such, it has transformative prospects. While implementing the commitment, the government has faced several challenges that can be categorised in two main aspects:

1. lack of inventory in the institutions on the data that they hold or collect; and
2. lack of human resources and ICT equipment.[3]

Furthermore, the IRM researcher found that not all data available is in an open-data format, and the data are not updated regularly, which hampers its validity and usability.

Moving forward

The IRM researcher recommends a new commitment should be adopted, and it should build on the current implementation and assessment findings. Measures need to be proposed to facilitate overcoming identified problems in order to make sure that the commitment is not limited in its scope, covering only institutions that have adequate IT staff and equipment at place. In those efforts, the government should

1. design a plan that would include specific measures for overcoming problems in order to ensure compliance to open-data standards by all information holders;
2. work and engage with local governments in order to promote open data on the local level and transfer knowledge from the central level;
3. monitor the implementation of the measures and their effects, and mitigate eventual risks. In doing so, the government should ensure feedback from stakeholders; and
4. ensure that the open data made available satisfies five-star criteria for open data.[4]

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[1] IRM Stakeholders consultation forum minutes, see http://bit.ly/19C3wpY.
[2] Government's OGP self-assessment
[3] Ibid
[4] http://5stardata.info/

O2.M2: Development of Business Model for Open Data

Development of new business models from the open-type data (Open data- the engine of the economic development). Development of indicators to be used for measurement of the benefit enjoyed by the small and medium sized enterprises-business from the use of the open data.

Commitment Description						
Answerability	**Lead Institution**	Ministry of Information Society and Administration				
	Supporting Institutions	Business community and the chambers				
	Point of Contact Specified?	No				
Specificity and Measurability		High (Commitment language provides clear, measurable, verifiable milestones for achievement of the goal)				
Relevance	**OGP Grand Challenges**	N/A				
	OGP Values	**Access to Information**	**Civic Participation**	**Accountability**	**Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.**	**None**
						√
Ambition						
New vs. Pre-existing		**Potential Impact**				
New		None (the commitment maintains the status quo)				
Level of Completion						
Start date: 7/12		**Actual completion**		Not started		
End date: 12/14		**Projected completion**		Substantial		
Next Steps						
None: Abandon commitment						

What happened?

The IRM researcher found that the government has not started with the implementation.
The OGP contact person stated that the implementation of this commitment is dependent on the available data produced by state and public bodies in an open format. Since the release of open data has just started, the implementation is delayed.[1]

Did it matter?

While the implementation of this commitment may contribute to the economic growth of the country and provide information about the usability of released data, it will not move forward the practice of the government in this area.

Moving forward

The IRM researcher suggests dropping this commitment as its implementation falls outside the competences of the government, and as written, this commitment does not clearly articulate how it will promote or utilise core OGP values of transparency, participation, and accountability.

[1]Ms. Irena Bojadzieva, MISA, IRM Interview, Skopje, 4 October 2013

O2.M3: Prioritizing Opening of Data

Prioritizing opening of data requested and identified by the stakeholders and the citizens. This measure will be implemented using the online consultation tools that will make it possible for the citizens and companies to post requests and elaborate them, and having the other stakeholders support such request, thus making transparent prioritization. These requests are submitted, along with a priority list, to the Government for approval.

Commitment Description		
Answerability	**Lead institution**	Ministry of Information Society and Administration
	Supporting Institutions	All information holders
	Point of Contact Specified?	No
Specificity and Measurability		Medium (Commitment language describes an activity that is objectively verifiable, but does not contain specific milestones or deliverables)
Relevance	**OGP Grand Challenges**	N/A

	OGP Values	**Access to Information**	**Civic Participation**	**Accountability**	**Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.**	**None**
			√			

Ambition	
New vs. Pre-existing	**Potential Impact**
New	Minor (the commitment is an incremental but positive step in the relevant policy area)

Level of Completion		
Start date: 7/12	**Actual completion**	Not started
End date: 12/14	**Projected completion**	Substantial

Next Steps
Revision of the commitment to be more achievable or measurable

What happened?

IRM found that the government had not started with the implementation of this commitment.

No activities were undertaken by the responsible authorities in order to assess the priorities and identify needs of stakeholders and citizens. While the commitment specifies that online consultation tools will be used, such consultation did not happen in the first year. This was confirmed by the government and by the stakeholdersduring the IRM researcher's review.

The self-assessment also does not provide information about this measure.

Did it matter?

Proactive release of information is much needed in Macedonia, and if this release is guided by stakeholders' priorities and needs, it would move the government practice forward in this area.

However, stakeholders raised concerns that using only online tools when assessing priorities will negatively affect marginalised groups and the results could be skewed towards the interests of businesses, transparency organisations, and big organisations from the capital.[1] Additionally, stakeholders raised concerns that the input provided by them is largely dependent on the perceptions and information they have about the data possessed by the government.[2]

In a context where the government has not provided a list of data registers held, the feedback received maybe limited or irrelevant.

Moving forward

The IRM researcher suggests revision of the commitment to be more measurable and achievable. In doing so, the government should

1. develop an inventory of data bases and the data registers it holds, and proactively publish this inventory in order to ensure informed consultations;
2. design specific activities to be implemented that willensure inclusive consultations with stakeholders on prioritising release of data. Such consultations might be organised by sectors;
3. develop a strategy for phased release of data by state and public institutions; and
4. design activities to monitor the implementation of the commitments in co-operation with stakeholders.

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[1] IRM Stakeholders consultation Forum Minutes, see http://bit.ly/19C3wpY.
[2] Ms. Ljubomir Trajkovski, Trajkovski & Partners Consulting, IRM Interview, Skopje, 4 November 2013

O2.M4: Use of Inter-Operable Services as Guidance in Opening Data

Using the inter-operable services as guidance in opening data. Opened data by one institution which is part of an inter-operable process to deliver the final services shall be boost for the other institutions in the chain to open their data too, thus enabling an alternative (third parties) and other to mediate in the provision of specific service.

Commitment Description						
Answerability	**Lead Institution**	Ministry of Information Society and Administration				
	Supporting Institutions	All institutions having the data				
	Point of Contact Specified?	No				
Specificity and Measurability		Low (Commitment language describes activity that can be construed as measurable with some interpretation on the part of the reader)				
Relevance	**OGP Grand Challenges**	N/A				
	OGP Values	**Access to Information**	**Civic Participation**	**Accountability**	**Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.**	**None**
		√			√	

Ambition	
New vs. Pre-existing	**Potential Impact**
New	Moderate (the commitment is a major step forward in the relevant policy area, but remains limited in scale or scope)

Level of Completion		
Start date: 7/12	**Actual completion**	Not started
End date: 12/14	**Projected completion**	Substantial

Next Steps
None: Abandon commitment

What happened?

The IRM found that the implementation of this commitment has not started.

The commitment is based on a new reform introduced by the government in 2011. This reform was to introduce interoperability, which enables inter-electronic data exchange between state administration bodies and institutions. It reduces time for receiving government services and improves their quality. The pilot project incorporated five state institutions (Central Register, Cadastre, Customs Office, Public Revenue Office, and Ministry of Interior Affairs), and it finished with inter-connecting four of them.[1] While initially it was planned that each subsequent year additional institutions would be included and connected, the implementation of the interoperability within state institutions is behind schedule, and no additional institutions are connected at the moment.

The Ministry of Information Society and Administration announced that in 2012 the following institutions would have been connected:

1. Health Insurance Fund
2. Employment Agency
3. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management
4. The Pension and Disability Insurance Fund of Macedonia

However, in March 2013 it was announced that by the end of 2013, the Health Insurance Fund; Employment Agency; and Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management will be connected, followed by the Pension and Disability Insurance Fund; Agency for Record Keeping; Ministry for Transport and Communication; Ministry of Economy; Ministry of Environmental Protection; and the City of Skopje in 2014.

For 2015, it is planned that the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Trade and Social Policy, Basic Court Skopje II, and Administrative Court will be connected.

Interoperability has not guided the opening of the data. From the four connected institution, only the Customs Office has shared four data sets on the open data portal, one of which is not in open-data format.[2] The government self-assessment does not contain any information about this measure, but government officials interviewed by the IRM researcher stated that due to privacy concerns, these data sets cannot be made available.

Did it matter?
This commitment has not been implemented. If it had been implemented, it would have stretched government practice beyond what existed before OGP. The government would have proactively released data sets that have the potential to be interconnected and to produce new knowledge and services.

Moving forward
The IRM researcher recommends this commitment be abandoned. The commitment itself is focused on opening data, and therefore, it should be merged with theexisting commitments on open data (O2M1).

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[1] Excluding the Ministry of Interior
[2] The spatial map of Customs offices.

O2.M5: Plan and Monitor the Implementation of the Plans for Opening the State Institutions Information.

The manners and dynamics of implementation of the plans for opening the state institutions information and their dynamic should contribute towards informed citizens.

Commitment Description		
Answerability	**Lead Institution**	Ministry of Information Society and Administration
	Supporting Institutions	All information holders
	Point of Contact Specified?	No
Specificity and Measurability		Medium (Commitment language describes an activity that is objectively verifiable, but does not contain specific milestones or deliverables)
Relevance	**OGP Grand Challenges**	N/A

	OGP Values	**Access to Information**	**Civic Participation**	**Accountability**	**Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.**	**None**
		√				

Ambition	
New vs. Pre-existing	**Potential Impact**
New	Transformative (the commitment entails a reform that could potentially transform "business as usual" in the relevant policy area)

Level of Completion		
Start date: 1/13	**Actual completion**	Limited
End date: 12/14	**Projected completion**	Limited

Next Steps
Revision of the commitment to be more achievable or measurable

What happened?

The IRM review found that the implementation of this commitment is very limited.

The commitment entails two processes: first, plans for opening data are to be adopted by information holders, and second, developing a plan for monitoring the implementation of the plans for proactive release of data in open format.

The legal basis for the proactive disclosure of information was stipulated in the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Character, adopted in 2006.[1] While there is a legal obligation to implement this law, the implementation has been limited. A recent assessment made by civil society found that only one third of the information holders have increased the amount of information being proactively or voluntarily published on their websites.[2] Furthermore, the assessment made by the State Commission for the Protection of the Right to Access of Public Information in light of OGP confirmed that the majority of information holders do not have a website, making proactive disclosure very difficult.[3] Furthermore, information holders are not legally obliged to adopt a plan for release of data, and so far this has not been implemented.

The Ministry of Information Society and Administration tried to promote the concept of open data, and it has implemented activities to co-ordinate this efforts.[4] However, at the moment,an assessment is being made about the capacity of and resources held by public institutions in order to inform the development of the plan that should be adopted.[5]

Did it matter?

The implementation of this commitment could transform government practices and significantly increase the scope of available data. The commitment reflects the concerns and requests of civil society on the importance of proactive disclosure of data, and it even goes a step further by requesting the released data to be offered in an open format. This, however, poses a risk of limiting the scope of released data, if the way of operation and the status of modernisation of the administration are taken into consideration. Civil society raised concerns that preparatory measures are not envisaged that will guide information holders in reforming policy on data recording to ensure implementation of open-data standards.[6]

Moving forward

The IRM recommends revision of the commitment in order to make it more achievable and to make it reflect the current context. Specifically, the government should

1. define measures that would help information holders develop plans for proactive release of data in open-data format, such us providing technical assistance, independent evaluators, or resources for ICT;
2. complement the strategic activities with measures that would allow transformation of the data record keeping into open-data format;
3. envisage the proactive release of information in closed formats, until the data is transformed as open data; and
4. design a monitoring system in a transparent and proactive procedure, and include stakeholder representatives in the monitoring bodies.

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[1] Law on Free Access to Information of Public Character, Official Gazette No. 13/2006, 86/2008, 6/2010, http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/
[2] Foundation Open Society – Macedonia. 2013. Overcoming the Principles of Secrecy in the Public Administration's Operation; Report from the research study on the right to public information in Macedonia. http://bit.ly/1bKXK59
[3] Oliver Serafimovski, State Commission for the Protection of the Right to Access of Public Information, IRM Researcher Interview, Skopje, 25 October 2013
[4] http://spinfo.org.mk
[5] Ms. Irena Bojadzieva, MISA, IRM Interview, Skopje, 4 October 2013
[6] IRM Stakeholders consultation forum minutes, see http://bit.ly/19C3wpY.

O2.M6: Analyses of the Legal Framework Enabling Open Data.

Analysis of the legal framework that provides the concept of open data and determines the need for eventual change. Remove the legal obstacles that would be identified in the process of opening of the information.

Commitment Description		
Answerability Lead Institution	Ministry of Information Society and Administration	
Supporting Institutions	Directorate for Personal Data Protection and all institutions that hold data	
Point of Contact Specified?	No	
Specificity and Measurability	High (Commitment language provides clear, measurable, verifiable milestones for achievement of the goal)	
Relevance OGP Grand Challenges	N/A	

OGP Values	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Accountability	Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.	None
	√				

Ambition	
New vs. Pre-existing	**Potential Impact**
New	Moderate (the commitment is a major step forward in the relevant policy area, but remains limited in scale or scope)

Level of Completion		
Start date: 1/13	**Actual completion**	Substantial
End date: 12/14	**Projected completion**	Substantial

Next Steps
Further work on basic implementation

What happened?

The commitment consisted of two types of activities:(1) an analysis of the legal framework enabling implementation of open data was prescribed to provide a basis for the implementation of the second component of the commitment, that is,(2) legislative reform (i.e., amendment to the current legislation to remove identified obstacles, if any).

The Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA) is in an advanced stage of the process of analysis of the relevant European legislation governing re-use of data from the public sector.[1] This should contribute to the pace of the process of implementing open data practice in each institution, which was not at satisfactory levels in the first year.

Did it matter?

The concept of open data is new in the country, and the commitment will contribute to stretching government's efforts in this area by ensuring that an enabling environment is in place. However, one has to take into account the importance of prescribing supplementary measures, ones that will ensure the adopted legislation will be enforced, especially in light of systemic problemsthat often allow for the lack of implementation of legislation after adoption.[2]

Moving forward

The IRM researcher recommends further work on basic implementation. The government should ensure a participatory approach in the process of legislative reform, especially in the analysis and evaluation of the alternatives.

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[1] Government's OGP self-assessment.
[2] OECD/SIGMA. 2013. Country Assessment.

Moving forward

O3.M1: Improving services through www.uslugi.gov.mk

Improving the services and usage of www.uslugi.gov.mk through consolidation of data and increased level of reliability. Introduce a mechanism for the citizens which they can use to assess and comment the services. Introduction of feedback mechanism from the citizens in relation to the services, in order to improve the efficiency and better quality of services.

Commitment Description						
Answerability	**Lead Institution**	Ministry of Information Society and Administration				
	Supporting Institutions	All institutions				
	Point of Contact specified?	No				
Specificity and Measurability		Medium (Commitment language describes an activity that is objectively verifiable, but does not contain specific milestones or deliverables)				
Relevance	**OGP Grand Challenges**	N/A				
	OGP Values	**Access to Information**	**Civic Participation**	**Accountability**	**Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.**	**None**
			√			
Ambition						
New vs. Pre-existing	**Potential Impact**					
Pre-existing	Moderate (the commitment is a major step forward in the relevant policy area, but remains limited in scale or scope)					
Level of Completion						
Start date: 7/12	**Actual completion**	Substantial				
End date: 12/14	**Projected completion**	Substantial				
Next Steps						
Further work on basic implementation						

What happened?

IRM found substantial implementation of this commitment.

A feedback mechanism for citizens regarding the services available on uslugi.gov.mk was introduced. Citizens can leave a comment[1] or suggest a new service[2] that should be provided on the platform. The information that will be received through this mechanism should inform the process of improving the services and usage of www.uslugi.gov.mk in the future period. Stakeholders assessed the level of usage and usefulness of the web platform as substantial.

Did it matter?

This commitment should provide channels for participatory policy-making in terms of making institutions aware of problems and feeding them with ideas to improve services available through uslugi.giov.mk. While the platform existed prior to the country joining OGP, the consultation mechanism is new, as a result of the first action plan. The usefulness of the mechanism remains to be seen in the upcoming period, since information about the comments and suggestions from the citizens are not currently published. CSOs also pointed out that the portal covers many institutions and that

ensuring all data are valid and accurateremains a challenge. Additionally, the availability of the information only in the Macedonian language hinders the platform's usefulnessfor most citizens in the country.[3]The introduced feedback mechanism could serve as an instrument for detecting flawed information.

Moving forward

The IRM recommends further work on the basic implementation of this commitment. Specifically, the government may provide summary information about the feedback received from the citizens and the responses from the responsible institutions about the status of the comments and their implementation. The government should also consider providing information in other languages used in the country.

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[1] http://uslugi.gov.mk/Komentar.aspx [In Macedonian]
[2] http://uslugi.gov.mk/PredloziUsluga.aspx [In Macedonian]
[3] Minutes of IRM Stakeholders consultation. See , http://bit.ly/19C3wpY.

O3.M2: Integration of Citizen Logs, Their Update and Publishing

Development of integrated Citizens Log with clearly determined obligations per institutions. Integration of the Citizen Logs, their update and publishing.

Commitment Description						
Answerability	**Lead Institution**	Ministry of Information Society and Administration				
	Supporting Institutions	All institutions				
	Point of Contact specified?	No				
Specificity and Measurability		Medium (Commitment language describes an activity that is objectively verifiable, but does not contain specific milestones or deliverables)				
Relevance	**OGP Grand Challenges**	N/A				
	OGP Values	**Access to Information**	**Civic Participation**	**Accountability**	**Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.**	**None**
			√			

Ambition	
New vs. Pre-existing	**Potential Impact**
Pre-existing	Minor (the commitment is an incremental but positive step in the relevant policy area)

Level of Completion		
Start date: 7/12	**Actual completion**	Substantial
End date: 12/14	**Projected completion**	Substantial

Next Steps
Further work on basic implementation

What happened?

The citizens log was introduced before the government joined OGP. The aim of the citizens' log was to solve lack of communication and information about provision of public services. The logs specify the vision of the institution, provide information about the services it offers, indicate deadlines and associated costs, and provide complaint mechanisms and stipulated responsible persons. Institutional citizens' logs are available on uslugi.gov.mk, as well as on respective institutional website. The Ministry of Information Society and Administration in co-operation with the respective institutions monitors the implementation and submits quarterly assessments to the government. The usage of the citizens' logs vary from institution to institution, with high usage among some institutions (such as customs) to limited usage among universities. However, the data are scattered throughout a wide range of institutions, and the action plan envisaged integration of the citizen logs, their update, and their publication.

The government adopted a revision of the Strategy for the Reform of the Public Administration in 2012, providing specific measures targeting the citizens' log.[1] It provides clear timelines and responsible institutions for their implementation. Two activities were planned. First, the Ministry of Information Society and Administration

(MISA) was tasked with preparing an analysis of the current framework for the preparation of the citizens' log. Based on this analysis MISA was authorised to prepare recommendations for updating, modernising, and rebranding the citizens' log. The timeframe was the first half of 2013, and the IRM researcher found that those measures have been implemented. In the second half of 2013, the upgrade should take place.

Did it matter?
The commitment contributes to the facilitation of public participation and could promote increased trust in public institutions among the citizens. While the implementation is on time, the IRM researcher found that it varies among different responsible bodies, and having in mind the wide scope of the institutions covered, this will remain a challenge in the future. Results from the assessments and summary of public comments are still not publicly published; this undermines the public participation principles and does not utilise the possible transfer of knowledge.

Moving forward
The government should carry out further work on the implementation of this commitment. Ensuring transparency of the results of citizens' contributions should be considered. Additionally, civil society could be supported to conduct an independent assessment of the usage and usefulness of the measure.

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[1] Government of the Republic of Macedonia.2012. Revised Action Plan of the Implementation of the Strategy for the Reform of the Public Administration (2010-2015). http://bit.ly/1cAYEyN [In Macedonian]

O3.M3: 'Traffic light' Project For Citizens' Evaluation of the Administration.

Publish the results of the public administration evaluation projects (or continue the 'traffic light' project). There are several ongoing projects from different perspective evaluating citizen's satisfaction from the administration.

Commitment Description						
Answerability	**Lead Institution**	Ministry of Information Society and Administration				
	Supporting Institutions	None specified				
	Point of Contact Specified?	Yes				
Specificity and Measurability		High (Commitment language provides clear, measurable, verifiable milestones for achievement of the goal)				
Relevance	**OGP Grand Challenges**	N/A				
	OGP Values	**Access to Information**	**Civic Participation**	**Accountability**	**Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.**	**None**
			√			
Ambition						
New vs. Pre-existing	**Potential Impact**					
Pre-existing	Moderate (the commitment is a major step forward in the relevant policy area, but remains limited in scale or scope)					
Level of Completion						
Start date: 7/12	**Actual completion**	Substantial				
End date: 12/14	**Projected completion**	Substantial				
Next Steps						
Further work on basic implementation						

What happened?

The IRM researcher found substantial implementation of this commitment.

This commitment reflects one of the measures by government to incorporate citizens' input in the evaluation of the work of the administration. It is called the traffic light project, which consists of the installation of "traffic lights," which citizens use to provide evaluation of their visit, at administrative counters in the included institutions, as well as online evaluation opportunities. The idea was to provide citizens with an easy evaluation channel so they can provide feedback of their satisfaction by simply pushing butons: red (dissatisfied); yellow (neither) or green (satisfied). The system collects data on the employee working at the counter and on the respective institution.

The project was launched prior to the country joining OGP, and the novelty introduced was the availability of the data in open format. The government has a plan of expanding the range of the project, and the initial selection of the institutions covered was based on the number of citizens using the services.[1]Currently, five institutions are covered: State Cadastre, Ministry of Interior, Pubic Health Fund, Pension and Social Fund, Public Revenue Office, and their existing branches throughout the country.

The data from the citizens' votes are published on the open-data platform: opendata.gov.mk.

Did it matter?

The commitment promotes transparency in the work of the administration by providing access to citizens' satisfaction levels. However, it remains limited in its scope. The IRM researcher found limited use by citizens. Consulted stakeholders stated that the limited use could be due to the lack of trust among the citizens in the administration in general.[2]While, the available data is published on time, it is provided in aggregated form.

The description of the commitment goes beyond the "traffic light" project, but the assessment only provides information about the green light project. While consulted stakeholders did not have any information about the other projects, the official responsible for the green light project noted that these other projects are not part of the OGP commitments but are measures used to measure the satisfaction of citizens with government services.

Moving forward

The IRM researcher recommends further work on basic implementation of the commitment.

1. As it works toward completion, the government shouldtry to identify, in co-operation with stakeholders, the reasons behind low usage levels of the project by citizens, and it should try to design measures to address identified obstacles.
2. In order to make an informed conclusion about the usefulness of the measure, the government could also make an independent inquiry about the opinion of the usefulness from administrative workers who were evaluated, as well as their senior staff.
3. The government should expand the coverage, as planned with the Strategy for Reform of the Public Administration.

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[1] Ms. Sanja Petrovska, Ministry of Information Society and Administration, IRM researcher Interview, Skopje, 22 October 2013.
[2] The general low trust of citizens has been measures with various surveys. Please see for reference for example, Krzalovski A, 2013, [Trust in People and Institutions], MCMC, available at: http://bit.ly/1enktZ1 [in Macedonian], or Korunovska N, 2012, Parliamentary Control Over the Work of the Government of Republic of Macedonia, OSF-Macedonia, available at: http://bit.ly/1bqVxgt

O3.M4: Provision of the Government Services Through Cloud Computing.

Provision of the Government services through cloud computing. The cloud will enable the public institutions and public servants to share the systems and resources, making their cooperation more efficient in a situation of improved security and efficiency.

Commitment Description		
Answerability	**Lead Institution**	Ministry of Information Society and Administration
	Supporting Institutions	None specified
	Point of contact Specified?	No
Specificity and Measurability		Medium (Commitment language describes an activity that is objectively verifiable, but does not contain specific milestones or deliverables)
Relevance	**OGP Grand challenges**	N/A
	OGP Values	Access to Information / Civic Participation / Accountability / Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc. / None
		√ (None)

Ambition	
New vs. pre-existing	**Potential Impact**
New	Minor (the commitment is an incremental but positive step in the relevant policy area)

Level of Completion		
Start date: 7/12	**Actual completion**	Limited
End date: 12/14	**Projected completion**	Substantial

Next Steps
None: Abandon commitment

What happened?
The IRM researcher found that the implementation of this commitment is limited.

The implementation of the measure is in its initial stage. The level of digitalisation of the data held by the different institutions is being assessed by the Ministry of Information Society and Administration. Based on the assessment, the government will make a decision whether this measure is financially and organisationally justified.[1]

The process is still within the government, so consulted stakeholders could not contribute to the IRM researcher's review.

Did it matter?
The commitment is of a rather technical nature, and while it could contribute to the improvement of public services, it falls outside OGP values. As written, this commitment does not clearly articulate how it will promote or utilise core OGP values of transparency, participation, and accountability.

Moving forward

The IRM researcher recommends abandoning this commitment since it does not contribute to the openness of government or promote public participation.

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[1] Ms. Irena Bojadzieva, MISA, IRM Interview, Skopje, 4 October 2013.

O3.M5: Introduction of One-Off Request for the Information From the Citizens.

Consolidation of the databases trough implementation of the Law on Electronic Management which introduces one-off request for the information from the citizens.

Commitment Description		
Answerability	**Lead Institution**	Ministry of Information Society and Administration
	Supporting Institutions	All information holders
	Point of Contact Specified?	No specified
Specificity and Measurability		Medium (Commitment language describes an activity that is objectively verifiable, but does not contain specific milestones or deliverables)
Relevance	**OGP Grand Challenges**	N/A
	OGP Values	Access to Information / Civic Participation / Accountability / Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc. / None
		√ (None)

Ambition	
New vs. Pre-existing	**Potential Impact**
Pre-existing	Moderate (the commitment is a major step forward in the relevant policy area, but remains limited in scale or scope)

Level of Completion		
Start date: 7/12	**Actual completion**	Limited
End date: 12/14	**Projected completion**	Substantial

Next Steps
None: Abandon commitment

What happened?

IRM review concluded that the implementation of this commitment is limited.

The measures further reaffirm the reform in the management of the public record introduced with the Law on Electronic Management adopted in 2009.[1] This is a major reform,which is part of the e-government efforts, and due to its complexity, provided for a two-year period of compliance by the public institutions. The commitment specifically promotes the implementation of the provisions that protect citizens from multiple submissions of information that are already held by other public institutionsin various administrative procedures. Namely, the law obliges the authorities to ex officio obtain required data from other authorities whothat already hold the needed data. This releases citizens and businesses from obligation to submit information over and over again that other authorities or institutions already have.[2] The law further regulates the procedure and electronic management of the data.

While the legislation should have been enforced since September 2011, its implementation was delayed due to lack of technical and human resources within different authorities. In the meantime, authorities are collecting the required

information ex officio, but paper based, which significantly delays the procedures. For example, one of the consulted CSOs that works on provision of free legal aid shared an example regarding free legal aid request in which the responsible authority (Ministry of Justice) took two monthsto give the requesting institutions all relevant information about the financial situation of the free legal aid requester, which delayed the institutions' decision on the request.[3]

Did it matter?

This commitment is part of the e-government strategy that contributes to the improvement of public services. While e-government remains a useful tool in providing services to citizens,[4] the IRM researcher finds this commitment is irrelevant for OGP.As written, this commitment does not clearly articulate how it will promote or utilise core OGP values of transparency, participation, and accountability.

Moving forward

The IRM researcher recommends that this commitment is abandoned sinceit is irrelevant to the core values of OGP.

[1] Law on Electronic Management, published in the Official Gazette No. 105/2009 and 47/2011.
[2] Ibid, article 4
[3] Minutes of IRM stakeholders' consultation. See, http://bit.ly/19C3wpY.
[4] European Commission. 2013. Country Progress Report for 2013. http://bit.ly/1di2ZZH

O4.M1: Publication of Easy to Search Public Information.

Improved access to public information.Publish the information in format that will make them easy to search, as well as in format that makes them ready to use (usable).

Commitment Description		
Answerability	**Lead Institution**	Commission for Access to Public Character Information
	Supporting Institutions	Directorate for Personal Data Protection and all institutions having data
	Point of Contact Specified?	No
Specificity and Measurability		None (Commitment language contains no verifiable deliverables or milestones)
Relevance	**OGP Grand Challenges**	N/A

	OGP Values	**Access to Information**	**Civic Participation**	**Accountability**	**Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.**	**None**
		√				

Ambition	
New vs. Pre-existing	**Potential Impact**
New	Minor (the commitment is an incremental but positive step in the relevant policy area)

Level of Completion		
Start date: 7/12	**Actual completion**	Limited
End date: 12/14	**Projected completion**	Substantial

Next Steps
Revision of the commitment to be more achievable or measurable

What happened?

The IRM researcher found limited implementation of this commitment.

Although the Freedom of Information (FOI) Law existed before OGP, the commitment to publish the information in a format that will make them easy to search, as well as in a format that makes them ready to use was not required. The self-assessment does not reflect on this commitment, but it only refers to the implementation of the Law on Free Access to Public Information (FOI law) in general. The terms, conditions, manners, and proceduresof exercising the right to free access to public information in Macedonia are stipulated in the FOI law. The FOI law operationalised the right of all to request information, which has been a constitutionally guaranteed right since 1991. The FOI law was adopted in January 2006 and aims to ensure transparency in the operation of information holders (all state and public institutions as well as private entities that have transferred public functions) to provide access to information that they have created or hold and to enable natural persons and legal entities to exercise their right to free access to public information.[1]

While the legal framework was assessed as satisfactory,[2] the implementation remains deficient. The number of complaints received by the Commission for Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information (commission) in 2012 compared with 2011 tripled. The commission reported that the largest number of complaints, 74 percent, were filed on the grounds of the so-called silence of the administration, or mute

refusals.[3] While the legislation is in force already for seven years, one third of information holders are still skeptical that the FOI law increased transparency and the scope of available information.[4]

The FOI law obliges the information holders to proactively publish certain types of information. The idea for so-called active transparency is to make available key information on public operations and enable citizens' access to that information without having to formally initiate the process for requesting access to public information. Although the law lists the types of information and manners in which they should be made proactively available, in reality, the information holders find it difficult to comply with this obligation.[5]

Public awareness of the right to free access to public information remains low. Assessment of information holders for the application of the right of free access to information and the problems they are encountering show that information holders are aware that a significant proportion of citizens are not familiar with the FOI law. Namely, 40.5 percent of information holders assessed that citizens have little or no knowledge of the law, while 40.3 percent believe that citizens have certain knowledge.[6] Additionally, for the purposes of implementing OGP commitments, the commission prepared a questionnaire for information holders to detect their readiness for publishing open-data information. The commission reported that a majority of the information holders do not have a website.[7]

Did it matter?
The perceived benefit of the commitment was to publish all information held and created by information holders in a format that makes them ready for the public to use. However, the commitment was inapplicable to OGP because there was no analysis of the situation for readiness of the institutions for a transition from paper to efficient electronic record. Hence, this commitment should not be included in the OGP action plan.

Additionally, it is evident that due to the modest funds disposed by the commission, it was unable to realise its law-stipulated competences for 2012.[8] The commission's limited budget for 2012 was the main reason behind the failure to publish the list of public information holders, pursuant to the law and to the website upgrade. Remarks made by and problems indicated by the commission, based on its approved budget and the budget adjustment, were

1. the commission was unable to promote free access to public information, such as media presentation of the FOI law, and
2. the commission was unable to implement the activities planned, including the trainings for information holders in the country.

At the IRM stakeholders' forum, the impression and knowledge among civil society representatives was that the information was not made more accessible. Also, in spite of citizens' positive attitude towards the law, in general, they do not believe they enjoy fast and easy access to public information.[9]

Overall, enforcement of the FOI law is inefficient, with one third of information holders failing to submit their annual reports to the commissionand penalties not imposed for this failure.[10] Declarative commitment for protection and promotion of the right of free access is not sufficient to guarantee its full exercise in practice. The state needs to make additional efforts to eliminate all shortcomings in its annual reports as identified by the commission.

Moving forward

The IRM researcher recommends significant revisions of the commitment for it to be more achievable. Hence, in the future, focusing on compliance with legal obligation would be of crucial importance in terms of increasing the scope of publicly available information on the websites of competent institutions, but also in terms of facilitating access to public information in general.

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[1] Law on Free Access to Information of Public Character, Official Gazette No. 13/2006, 86/2008, 6/2010, http://bit.ly/1dxOZJv

[2] Access Info Europe (Spain) and the Centre for Law and Democracy (Canada). 2012. Global Right to Information Rating. http://bit.ly/1fKKPAG

[3] Commission for Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information. 2013. [Annual Report on the Commission's Operation in 2012]. http://bit.ly/1brs4SW (In Macedonian)

[4] Foundation Open Society – Macedonia. 2013. Overcoming the Principles of Secrecy in the Public Administration's Operation; Report from the research study on the right to public information in Macedonia. http://bit.ly/1lLHPLH

[5] Ibid

[6] Ibid

[7] Commission for Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information. 2013. [Annual Report on the Commission's Operation in 2012]. http://bit.ly/1brs4SW (In Macedonian)

[8] Ibid

[9] Foundation Open Society – Macedonia. 2013. Overcoming the Principles of Secrecy in the Public Administration's Operation; Report from the research study on the right to public information in Macedonia. http://bit.ly/1bKXK59

[10] European Commission. 2012. Progress Report for Macedonia.

O4.M2: 1.Use of Harm Test. and 2. Publication of Information Gathered Through the Free Access Law

Better enforcement of the Law on Free Access to Public Character Information with the open information

1. Use of the Damage Test in (requests, records, statistics, etc.) Commission for Access to Public Character 2012-2014 accordance with the Law on Free Access to Public Character Information

2. The information received in a procedure in front of the Commission for Access to Public Character Information should be published and made available not only for the claimant (with adherence to the limitations for the personal and classified information).

Commitment Description						
Answerability	**Lead Institution**	Commission for Access to Public Character Information				
	Supporting Institutions	Directorate for Personal Data Protection and all institutions having data				
	Point of contact Specified?	No				
Specificity and Measurability		Low (Commitment language describes activity that can be construed as measurable with some interpretation on the part of the reader)				
Relevance	**OGP Grand Challenges**	N/A				
	OGP Values	**Access to Information**	**Civic Participation**	**Accountability**	**Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.**	**None**
		√				

Ambition	
New vs. Pre-existing	**Potential Impact**
Pre-existing	None (the commitment maintains the status quo)

Level of Completion		
Start date: 7/12	**Actual completion**	Limited
End date: 12/14	**Projected completion**	Substantial

Next Steps
Revision of the commitment to be more achievable or measurable

What happened?

The IRM researcher found limited implementation of this commitment.

The comment defined in the action plan is comprised of two independent commitments related to the enforcement of the Law on Free Access to Public Information, which entered in effect in 2006. The Law on Free Access to Public Information stipulates the exceptional cases in which the information request can be rejected. Information holders are obliged to conduct harm test and assess which interest has primacy, the interest protected by non-disclosure of the requested information, or the public interest to disclose the information. In this regard, if the public interest that would be achieved by allowing access to the requested information is greater than the protected interest, the information holder is obliged to provide access thereto.

Be that as it may, the information holder is obliged to conduct the public interest test. This must be done prior to denying access to information on the basis that the information in question does not fall under the free access to public information mechanism. Apart from these exceptions, the law also stipulates an obligation for the information holders to proactively publish their information (e.g., laws and bylaws, press releases, statistical data on their operation, performance reports).

In the first year of implementating the OGP ation plan, the information holders adopted 11 decisions on denying access to public information. In six cases, the commission revoked the decision taken by the information holder and instructed them to implement the harm test prior to denying access to the information requested (i.e., prior to rejecting the information request).[1]

The IRM found no implementation in practice of the second part of the commitment.This part is the publishing of information that was disclosed in front of the commi sion. On its website, the commission publishes only the decisions taken upon appeals it has considered. The self-assessment report does not include information on the implementation of this commitment, nor does it provide reasons for its omission.

Did it matter?

The 2010 amendments to the Law on Free Access to Public Information stipulate that the harm test is mandatory for information holders when they deny access to information. Reports of various non-governmental organisations have noted cases in which the harm test was not implemented. These organisations indicate that the decisions taken to approve or deny access to information do not include evidence on the application of the harm test (i.e., they do not include an explanation of the procedure pursued to assess the predominant interest: the public interest or the interest being protected by classifying the information as confidential).[2] The IRM researcher did not find a single case in which the information holder assessed—after having implemented the harm test—that public interest has primacy. Also, the IRM researcher did not find a single case led by the commission in which the latter decided that the public interest has primacy. It has been remarked by the commission that it does not have competences to declassify confidential information. Moreover, they emphasised during an interview that a particular problem hindering their decisionmaking is the absence of a definition for public interest.[3] All these render the activity in question insufficiently ambitious, especially knowing that the Law on Free Access to Public Information has been in effect for seven years already.

As regards the second portion of the commitment, which concernsthe publication of information disclosed in a procedure led in front of the commission, the relevant parties indicated two challenges: (1) it should be clearly indicated which entity bears the responsibility for publication of this information, and (2) proactive publication of information on the part of information holders.[4]

In terms of the first challenge (i.e., whether the commission or the information holder should publish the information in question), the non-governmental organisations stressed that in the last seven years of the law's enforcement, they have not identified a single case in which the commission obtained the information requested, from information seekers. On the contrary, the commission has instructed the information holder to disclose the information requested, which means it does not have (or has not acquired during its decision-making process) the information for which it has decided should be disclosed to the citizens. In terms of the second challenge, it is of great importance for information holders to publish the information they have created in a timely manner.

Overall, enforcement of the Law on Free Access to Public Information is not satisfactory. According to relevant data, in more than half of the cases in which access to information was denied, the information holders did not implement the mandatory harm test. A commitment declaring the implementation of the harm test in compliance with the law, as formulated in the action plan, does not guarantee progress in this regard. The commission needs additional human and financial resources in order to be able to implement the legal competences with which it has been entrusted.[5]

Moving forward

The IRM researcher recommends significant revision of the commitment to be more achievable. The commitment, which in essence is comprised of two individual commitments, should be revised within the next OGP action plan. When doing so, the government should

1. ensure that it is measurable and that it contributes to solving the problem of the lack of implementation of the harm test. In particular it is important to adopt a bylaw that would govern the procedure for implementation of the harm test;
2. incorporate education on the harm test and partial access to information within the committment on education on access to information (commitment O4M5); and
3. create a website of the commission that would host open formats of information disclosed to the information requester in the procedure led in front of the commission.

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[1] Oliver Serafimovski, State Commission for the Protection of the Right to Access of Public Information, IRM Researcher Interview, Skopje, 25 October 2013
[2] Foundation Open Society – Macedonia. 2013. Six Years Later: Is the Wall of Silence Cracking? Analysis of the Implementation of the Law on Free Access to Public Information. http://bit.ly/1erwnSb
[3] Oliver Serafimovski, State Commission for the Protection of the Right to Access of Public Information, IRM Researcher Interview, Skopje, 25 October 2013
[4] Minutes of IRM stakeholders' consultation. See, http://bit.ly/19C3wpY.
[5] Commission for Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information. 2013. Annual Report on the Commission's Operation in 2012. http://bit.ly/1brs4SW [in Macedonian]

O4.M3: Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Access to Public Documents.

Law on Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Access to Public Documents. Signed in June 2009 but no Law on Ratification has yet been adopted.

Commitment Description		
Answerability	**Lead Institution**	Ministry of Justice
	Supporting Institutions	None specified
	Point of Contact Specified?	No
Specificity and Measurability		High (Commitment language provides clear, measurable, verifiable milestones for achievement of the goal)
Relevance	**OGP Grand Challenges**	N/A

	OGP Values	**Access to Information**	**Civic Participation**	**Accounta bility**	**Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.**	**None**
		√				

Ambition	
New vs. Pre-existing	**Potential Impact**
No (pre-existing)	Minor (the commitment is an incremental but positive step in the relevant policy area);

Level of completion		
Start date: 7/12	**Actual completion**	Not started
End date: 12/13	**Projected completion**	Substantial

Next Steps
Further work on basic implementation

What happened?

The IRM researcher found that implementation of this commitment has not started.

Macedonia was among the first 12 signatory countries of the Council of Europe Convention on Access to Public Documents in June 2009.[1] The convention contributes to efficiency, effectiveness, and integration of public services. Therefore, the members of the civil society organisations consulted by the IRM researcher expressed their satisfaction with and commended the progress made on this activity. Moreover, prior to the adoption of the OGP action plan, the non-government organisations had lobbied for preparation of a draftlaw for ratification of this convention and submitted an analysis on the country's readiness for ratification.[2]

The self-assessment does not contain any information about this commitment. Non-governmental organisations reported that by mid-2013, they had been presented with a response from the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Macedonia that the development of a pre-ratification analysis was currently underway.[3]

Did it matter?

Ratification of the Convention on Access to Public Documents will mean a step forward in improving and promoting the right to free access to information. Restricted access will apply only for the purpose of protecting other rights and legitimate interests.

Moving forward

The IRM researcher recommends further work on basic implementation of this commitment. As it works to continue implementation of this commitment, the government should

1. develop a pre-ratification analysis for the convention;
2. develop a draft law on Ratification of the Convention on Access to Public Documents; and
3. harmonise the national legislation on the right to free access with the Council of Europe's Convention.

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[1] Council of Europe. 2009. Council of Europe Convention on Access to Official Documents CETS No.: 205. http://bit.ly/19VOTdY

[2] Minutes of IRM stakeholders' consultation. See, http://bit.ly/19C3wpY.

[3] Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Macedonia. 2013. [Response to the request for free access to information.] http://bit.ly/1cDzCPC (In Macedonian)

O4.M4: Electronic Submission of Requests for Access to Public Character Information.

Introduce possibility to submit electronically the requests for access to public character information. Upgrade the Commission website (or build new one) for timely management of the records, statistics, requests, etc.

Commitment Description						
Answerability	**Lead Institution**	Commission for Access to Public Character Information				
	Supporting Institutions	All institutions having data				
	Point of Contact Specified?	No				
Specificity and Measurability		Medium (Commitment language describes an activity that is objectively verifiable, but does not contain specific milestones or deliverables)				
Relevance	**OGP Grand Challenges**	N/A				
	OGP Values	**Access to Information**	**Civic Participation**	**Accountability**	**Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.**	**None**
		√				
Ambition						
New vs. Pre-existing	**Potential Impact**					
Pre-existing	None (the commitment maintains the status quo)					
Level of Completion						
Start date: 7/12	**Actual completion**	Not started				
End date: 12/14	**Projected completion**	Substantial				
Next Steps						
None: Abandon commitment						

What happened?

The IRM researcher found that implementation of this commitment has not started. The possibility for information requests to be submitted electronically, in addition to oral or written submission, was guaranteed from the day the Law on Free Access to Public Information was adopted in 2006. Any request submitted in electronic form should contain an electronic signature. This additional requirement, stipulated by the Law on Electronic Data and Electronic Signature,[1] implies that the person requesting information should possess a valid certificate with his or her handwritten signature, as used on hard-copy documents. On the basis of annual operation reports prepared by the Commission for the Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information, the IRM researcher did not find data or information on established records concerning the number of information requests submitted in electronic form. However, the research on the application of the right to free access to public information on the part of journalists identified that in 46 percent of cases, the journalists requested the institutions to disclose the information electronically, but only in 34 percent of them obtained the information in electronic from.[2]The self-assessment also does not contain information on the implementation of this measure.

Did it matter?

The OGP action plan clarifies that this commitment will be implemented by upgrading (or designing a new) website for the commission, with the purpose of timely management of data, statistics, information requests, and the like. Although this description shows that it is a commitment that would transform this field of operation, the competent commission indicated four main challenges in that regard: (1) lack of human resources (i.e., non-recruitment of an IT engineer tasked to maintain the website); (2) the commission's modest annual budgets for 2012 and 2013 do not allocate funding for upgrading or designing a new website; (3) lack of funds for additional training for information mediation officers tasked to deal with electronic information requests; and (4) most information holders do not have valid e-mail addresses for submission of requests for free access to information.[3]

In terms of the first challenge, the commission reported that it currently employs only 14 of the total of 44 job positions anticipated in the systematisation act and that it has not recruited an IT engineer.[4] As for the second and third challenge, it is obvious that the commission has a small budget, 76 percent of which is spent on salaries and 24 percent of which is used for procurement of goods and services.[5] Justification for the fourth challenge is related to the last activity of the commission, where it wished to carry outassessment among information holders in respect of the needs of OGP, and it received responses from only 300 of the total of 1,253 information holders.[6]

During the consultations, non-governmental organisations expressed their reservations about the creation of a new website because, in their opinion, such action would not promote the right to free access to information in electronic form. They believe this because possession of an electronic signature certificate is mandatory, as stipulated by the Law on Free Access to Public Information.[7] On the other hand, electronic submission of requests currently is not dependent on possession of an official e-certificate (i.e., ordinary e-mail correspondence is considered to be an electronic request). Therefore, the commitment if implemented will require obtaining an e-certificate. This will be a setback in the implementationbecause (1) the certificate is costly[8] and (2) many information holders do not have administrative capacity at the moment to receive such a certificate. This in the end will restrict the right to information in practice.

Moving forward

This commitment does not need to be reworked into the next action plan. In fact, the commitment should be abandoned.

There is no need for investment in resources similar to those anticipated under objective 4, commitments 1 and 2. In terms of the objective 4, commitment 2, the IRM researcher recommends the commission's website be upgraded.

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[1] [Law on Electronic Data and Electronic Signature], Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia no. 34/2001; 6/2002 and 98/2008, http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/

[2] Centre for Civil Communications. 2012. Research on the Application of the Right to Free Access to Public Information on the Part of Journalists. http://bit.ly/1ceOBoh

[3] Oliver Serafimovski, State Commission for the Protection of the Right to Access of Public Information, IRM Researcher Interview, Skopje, 25 October 2013

[4] Commission for Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information. 2013. [Annual Report on the Commission's Operation in 2012]. http://bit.ly/1brs4SW (In Macedonian)

[5] Ibid

[6] Ibid

[7] Ibid

[8] At the moment the cost is approximately 10 Euro. For a country with around 40% of the population living in poverty this is a significant cost.

O4.M5: Training of Access to Information Officers.

Training of all the officers in the institutions in charge for access to public character information

Commitment Description		
Answerability · **Lead Institution**	Commission for Access to Public Character Information	
Supporting Institutions	All institutions	
Point of Contact Specified?	No	
Specificity and Measurability	High (Commitment language provides clear, measurable, verifiable milestones for achievement of the goal)	

Relevance · **OGP Grand Challenges**	N/A				
OGP Values	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Accountability	Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.	None
	√				

Ambition	
New vs. Pre-existing	**Potential Impact**
Pre-existing	Minor (the commitment is an incremental but positive step in the relevant policy area)

Level of Completion		
Start date: 7/12	**Actual completion**	Limited
End date: 12/14	**Projected completion**	Substantial

Next Steps
New commitment building on existing implementation

What happened?

The IRM researcher found limited implementation of this commitment.

Pursuant to the Law on Free Access to Public Information, the Commission for Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information is the competent authority for education-related matters (i.e., to organise and deliver training for information mediation officers).[1] In 2012, the commission identified 1,253 information holders. In the first implementing year of the OGP action plan, the commission organised only two training sessions and covered 148 information mediation officers from central level institutions.[2]

The self-assessment report contains information on the realisation of this measure—namely, the training sessions organised and delivered in the course of 2012 and prior to the adoption of the OGP action plan. It indicated that "in cooperation and with financial assistance from donors," the commission managed to deliver 15 training sessions and 15 workshops for 227 information mediation officers, citizens' associations and foundations, media outlets, and councilors from local governments. While the self-assessment report states that in 2013 the commission continued to implement this commitment, during an interview with the commission, the IRM researcher found that the activities of the commission in the first year were rather limited compared to 2011.This was due to limited resources available for this purpose.

Did it matter?

This commitment was present even before the action plan, notably as an obligation anticipated in the 2006 Law on Free Access to Public Information. Nevertheless, the manner in which this commitment is anticipated in the action plan can contribute to increased efforts on the part of the state, with a view to allocate more funds to support the commission's operation. This will contribute to addressing the challenge faced by the commission concerning the training of newly appointed information mediation officers at information holders who will replace officers that have already been trained. Moreover, this commitment will contribute to the implementation of advanced training for already trained officers, tailored to their needs that have emerged during implementations of the Law on Free Access to Public Information.

Both civil society organisations and the Information Commission recommended, in addition to training information mediation officers, targeting other stakeholders, for example, journalists, NGO activists, citizens, and the like.[3]Furthermore, available research on the application of the right to free access to information by journalists shows that as many as 68 percent of journalists have indicated the need to be trained on the enforcement and use of the right to free access and the law.[4] Keeping in mind that the information holders are aware that as many as 40 percent of citizens have limited knowledge of or are unaware of the Law on Free Access to Public Information,[5] it would be necessary to expand the scope and coverage of this commitment.

Moving forward

The IRM researcher recommends a new commitment building on existing implementation.In order to continue with the implementation of, but also to expand this training-related commitment to other stakeholders, the government should

1. allocate more funds in the commission's operational budget to enable it to implement training sessions that would not depend on donor funds;
2. allocate more funds in the commission's budget to enable its members to attend international training sessions and to acquire advanced knowledge on the exercise of the right to free access to information;
3. enable recruitment of employees in the commission, thereby enabling it to efficiently implement the competences it has been entrusted with by law; and
4. propose policy changes, thereby enabling adoption of a bylaw that would govern the issue of training for information requesters, journalists, citizens, associations, and the like.

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[1] Law on Free Access to Information of Public Character, Official Gazette No. 13/2006, 86/2008, 6/2010, http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/

[2] Oliver Serafimovski, State Commission for the Protection of the Right to Access of Public Information, IRM Researcher Interview, Skopje, 25 October 2013

[3] Minutes of IRM stakeholders' consultation. See, http://bit.ly/19C3wpY.

[4] Center for Civil Communications. 2012. Research on the Application of the Right to Free Access to Public Information on the Part of Journalists. http://bit.ly/1ceOBoh

[5] Foundation Open Society – Macedonia. 2013. Overcoming the Principles of Secrecy in the Public Administration's Operation; Report from the research study on the right to public information in Macedonia. http://bit.ly/1bKXK59

O5.M1: 1.Identification of Low Interest Areas for Business Investments. 2.Publication of Research.

Identify the information relevant for the citizens in which the private sector would not be interested to invest. Publish the results from publicly financed research.

Commitment Description		
Answerability	**Lead Institution**	Ministry for education and Science
	Supporting Institutions	Universities
	Point of contact Specified?	No
Specificity and Measurability		Medium (Commitment language describes an activity that is objectively verifiable, but does not contain specific milestones or deliverables)
Relevance	**OGP Grand Challenges**	N/A

	OGP Values	**Access to Information**	**Civic Participation**	**Accountability**	**Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.**	**None**
Relevance		√	√			

Ambition	
New vs. Pre-existing	**Potential Impact**
New	Transformative (the commitment entails a reform that could potentially transform "business as usual" in the relevant policy area)

Level of Completion		
Start date: 1/13	**Actual completion**	Not started
End date: 12/14	**Projected completion**	Limited

Next Steps
Further work on basic implementation

What happened?

The government self-assessment report does not contain any information about this commitment, and it is unclear whether the government has withdrawn this commitment.

The Ministry of Education and Science continued with its practice of publishing calls for financing of research projects, but these calls have not been based on identified needs of citizens nor have they beenbased on areas in which the private sector is interested in investing. Stakeholders also pointed to the fact that the business sector does not invest in research and innovation.[1] Namely, the investments in research and development are the lowest in Europe, at around 0.2 percent of GDP in the last decade, with business sector participation at approximately 0.03 percent of GDP.[2] Non-government organisations reported that in mid-2013, they were presented with a response from the ministry and higher institutions with a list of publicly financed projects, mostly through co-operation with other countries or old information (from 2012).[3] No consultations or assessments were made by the Ministry of Education and Science to identify citizens' relevant information.

Publicly financed research is not published online, thus it is not providing easy-to-access research as committed. The Ministry of Education and Science launched a new web portal (http://nauka.mk) in January 2011. The aim of the portal was to record all the scientific and educational activities at public scientific and educational institutions in the Republic of Macedonia. It stated that it would be used to provide access to the results of the researches, enable dissemination of information and experiences, and facilitate development of new projects.[4] The IRM researcher could not find any research results on the web platform, nor were there any comments in the forum section of the platform. A total of 47 researchers from the country are registered on the platform, along with only one Macedonian researcher from abroad. This is a very limited number compared to the total of 2,394 researchers in Macedonia, of which 79 are in the business sector, 668 in the government sector, and 1,647 at universities.[5]

Did it matter?

The commitment has great potential for transforming the area as currently research results are not available and publicly funded research is only driven by scientists.

In relation to OGP, one of the researches funded by the Ministry of Education is evaluating the satisfaction of the users of e-government in Macedonia,[6] an evaluation which should be finished by the end of 2013 and could inform the development of the next OGP action plan, in particular the part related to e-government.

Moving forward

The IRM researcher recommends further work on basic implementation of this commitment. As it works to continue implementation of this commitment, the government should

1. explore possibilities for conducting a citizens' survey to identify needs for research;
2. upgrade nauka.mk and publish results of all publicly financed research. This should include not only additional research funded through the calls by the Ministry of Education and Science, but also research conducted by public institutions funded from the state budget; and
3. specify clear activities and expected outputs to be delivered.

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[1] Minutes of IRM Stakeholders consultation. see, http://bit.ly/19C3wpY.
[2] Western Balkans Regional R&D Strategy. 2013. Country Paper – Macedonia. http://bit.ly/1gBhih3
[3] Official answers from the Ministry of Education and Science and universities available at http://spinfo.org.mk [In Macedonian]
[4] http://nauka.mk About the project [In Macedonian]
[5] Ibid; Western Balkans Regional R&D Strategy.
[6] Ministry of Education and Science. 2013. List of research projects financed by the ministry; Project No.10. http://mon.gov.mk/images/pdf/proekti-slovenija.pdf [In Macedonian]

O5.M2: Scientific and Research Cooperation Through the Internet.

Publish information that will enable scientific and research cooperation through the Internet (international aspect). Advancement of the e-science

Commitment Description						
Answerability	**Lead Institution**	Ministry for education and Science				
	Supporting Institutions	Universities				
	Point of Contact Specified?	No				
Specificity and Measurability		Low (Commitment language describes activity that can be construed as measurable with some interpretation on the part of the reader)				
Relevance	**OGP Grand Challenges**	N/A				
	OGP Values	**Access to Information**	**Civic Participation**	**Accountability**	**Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.**	**None**
		√				

Ambition	
New vs. Pre-existing	**Potential Impact**
New	Minor (the commitment is an incremental but positive step in the relevant policy area)

Level of Completion		
Start date: 1/13	**Actual completion**	Not started
End date: 12/14	**Projected completion**	Limited

Next Steps
Revision of the commitment to be more achievable or measurable

What happened?
The IRM researcher found that implementation of this commitment has not started. The self-assessment report does not contain any information about this measure, nor are there any reasons provided for omission of this commitment.

The commitment aims at advancing e-science, but it does not provide information about the current status of the e-science, nor does it envisage clear milestones that could be used to measure the implementation of the commitment.

Did it matter?
It is difficult to assess the potential of this commitment since stakeholders consulted by the IRM researcher raised a concern that it did not match the current status in the area, making the commitment rather unrealistic.[1] In particular, it is doubtful that advancement of e-science is possible without prior resolution of the problems in the area that consist of

1. insufficient infrastructural facilities and institutional infrastructure;
2. underdeveloped mechanisms for transferring knowledge and research in the business sector;
3. unbalanced distribution of researchers by sector;

4. low investments in applied research and innovation and a low level of private investment in R&D; and
5. a disproportionately low number of young researchers.[2]

Moving forward

The IRM researcher recommends significant revision of this commitment to make it more achievable. Indoing so, the government should

1. clearly identify what the problem is that it tries to address;
2. design clear milestones and appropriate activities to achieve them (e.g., one milestone could be integration into the European Research Area);
3. design a realistic step-by-step plan, taking into consideration the current status in the area; and
4. align the commitment to stretch already existing governments efforts prescribed with the National Innovation Strategy 2012–2020 and its action plan 2013–2015, adopted in November 2012.

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[1] Minutes of IRM stakeholders' consultation. See, http://bit.ly/19C3wpY.
[2] Western Balkans Regional R&D Strategy. 2013. Country Paper – Macedonia. http://bit.ly/1gBhih3

O5.M3: Publication of Information from the State Statistical Office for Further Scientific Purposes.

Publish information from the State Statistical Office in order for that information to be undertaken and further worked on by the scientists.

Commitment Description						
Answerability	Lead Institution	State Statistical Office				
	Supporting Institutions	None specified				
	Point of Contact Specified?	No				
Specificity and Measurability		Low (Commitment language describes activity that can be construed as measurable with some interpretation on the part of the reader)				
Relevance	OGP Grand Challenges	N/A				
	OGP Values	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Accountability	Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.	None
		√				

Ambition	
New vs. Pre-existing	Potential Impact
New	Transformative (the commitment entails a reform that could potentially transform "business as usual" in the relevant policy area)

Level of Completion		
Start date: 7/12	Actual completion	Not started
End date: 12/14	Projected completion	Substantial

Next Steps
Revision of the commitment to be more achievable or measurable

What happened?

The IRM researcher found that implementation of this commitment has not started. While the self-assessment report does not contain any information about this commitment, the State Statistical Office has officially stated in a free access to information request that the implementation has not started.[1]

The State Statistical Office (SSO) has its own dissemination strategy that it adopted before the country joined OGP. Currently, access to statistical micro data is possible only for non-commercial and scientific purposes, subject to approval by the SSO and only in their offices. While, there is not much interest to access these types of data, the majority of the requests are being denied, and only a couple of request have been approved so far, none in the reporting period.[2] Significant efforts need to be made in order to change the institutional culture of the SSO that envision only non-commercial use of their data, and the lack of resources allocated to the SSO is also non-conducive to the envisaged policy reform in the OGP action plan.[3] Overall, the OGP did not influence already existing activities for dissemination of statistical data for scientific purposes.

Did it matter?

This commitment involves activities that could transform the practice in the area, if implemented. However, lack of ownership, concerns over privacy protection, and strong institutional culture to guarantee non-commercial and only scientific use of the micro data, are challenges that need to be considered in future. Stakeholders consulted supported the commitment, and argued that it should be prioritised since the SSO contains a rich database rich in data that would be very beneficial—if access to data is provided and easily accessible. They also raised concern that current practices of the SSO marginalise citizens and civil society living in the other parts of the country, since the access is only allowed in the main offices in the capital.[4]

Moving forward

In order to move government practice beyond the current baseline, the IRM researcher suggests revisingthe commitment to make it more measurable and achievable. As it works to revise the commitment, the government in co-operation with the SSO, civil society, and the business community should

1. develop a plan for gradual release of data based on the priorities of stakeholders;
2. allocate necessary resources to the SSO for the implementation of the measure,taking into consideration the current institutional and policy framework;
3. engage and support peer-exchange with other SSOs from Europe in order to raise awareness of the need and potential of free, open, and accessible statistical micro data; and
4. harmonise the national legislation in order to ensure release of micro data by the SSO.

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[1] www.spinfo.org.mk

[2] State Statistical Office, Interview, Skopje, 28 October 2013

[3] State Statistical Office. 2013. Annual Report of the State Statistical Office for 2012. http://www.stat.gov.mk [In Macedonian]

[4] Minutes of IRM stakeholders' consultation. See, http://bit.ly/19C3wpY.

O6.M1: Available Information About the Inspectorates

Increase the number of information the Inspectorates publish in the Internet and identify the types of information that will be useful for the citizens and businesses. Mapping the flow of the procedure, decisions, resolutions, changing the forms the inspectors fill in extending the level of data to be contained therein.

Commitment Description						
Answerability	**Lead Institution**	The Inspectorates				
	Supporting Institutions	Directorate for personal Data Protection				
	Point of contact Specified?	No				
Specificity and Measurability		Medium (Commitment language describes an activity that is objectively verifiable, but does not contain specific milestones or deliverables)				
Relevance	**OGP Grand Challenges**	N/A				
	OGP Values	**Access to Information**	**Civic Participation**	**Accountability**	**Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.**	**None**
		√				

Ambition	
New vs. Pre-existing	**Potential Impact**
New	Transformative (the commitment entails a reform that could potentially transform "business as usual" in the relevant policy area)

Level of Completion		
Start date: 7/12	**Actual completion**	Limited
End date: 12/15	**Projected completion**	Limited

Next Steps
Revision of the commitment to be more achievable or measurable

What happened?

The IRM researcher found that implementation of this commitment has not started. The self-assessment report also does not contain any information about this commitment, while the OGP focal person stated that delay in the implementation of this commitment is due to the various different capacities of the state inspectorates.[1]

There is a total of 14 inspectorates operating within the government of Republic of Macedonia. Additionally, every municipality can establish inspectorates for their competences. Out of the 14 inspectorates, only three inspectorates provided data to the open-data portal.[2] The majority of the inspectorates do not have a website, and as a result, do not publish any data about their work or what information they hold. This is the case with the following inspectorates:

1. State Foreign Exchange Inspectorate within the Ministry of Finance[3]
2. State Inspectorate for Forestry and Hunting within the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management[4]
3. State Inspectorate for Local Self-Government within the Ministry of Local Government[5]

4. State Inspectorate for Transport[6]
5. State Inspectorate for Construction and Urban Planning[7] and State Communal Inspectorate,[8] all within the Ministry of Transport and Communications
6. State Environmental Inspectorate within the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning[9]

Furthermore, a very few inspectorates publish quarterly reports that contain only statistical data about the measures undertaken by the inspectorates (visits, controls, etc.) without publishing data on the findings of those measures and their conducted inspections. This is the case of the following inspectorates:

1. State Inspectorate for Technical Inspection within the Ministry of Economy[10]
2. State Sanitary and Health Inspectorate within the Ministry of Health[11]
3. State Administrative Inspectorate within the Ministry of Information Society and Administration[12]

As stated above, only three inspectorates have published data in open formats. One of those inspectorates is the state inspectorate for agriculture within the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, and while this inspectorate does not have a website,[13] open-data portal links to data sets published on the official website of the ministry.[14] The IRM researcher found that the data sets contain only statistical data on measures, and no data on findings and results from the activities undertaken by the inspectorate. Furthermore, the portal is not regularly updated, since all eight data sets of information were uploaded on 28 January 2013 and all of the four registries were published on 1 February 2013.

The second inspectorate is the state education inspectorate within the Ministry of Education and Science,[15] who has made available to the public two data sets in open-data formats, but the IRM researcher found that the information made available is irrelevant for the inspectorate because it refers to the number of students who finished secondary school, and the number of students completing higher education, both in 2011.[16] This is information from the competence of the Ministry of Education and Science rather than from the inspectorate.

Lastly, the state labour inspectorate within the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has a special website and provides the most information.[17] However, representatives of the business sector complained that the information provided is in a format that makes it difficult to merge the information and to make it automatically accurate.[18] For example, the representatives from the business sector pointed to the fact that when the state labour inspectorate issues a measure for restriction of operations for a certain entity for a fixed period of time, the data are provided in a format that is not automatically corrected once the sanctioned time period expires, thus making it impossible to track the information or have automatically validated data. Furthermore, six data sets are provided on the open-data portal.[19] Four are related to information about measures undertaken that do not have data on the findings or results of those measures, one is related to legal persons where violations of the labour rules were found, and one is related to companies where persons who are not employed were found working. IRM researcher found discrepancies between the data available on the open-data portal and those available on the website of the state labour inspectorate, with more data available on the inspectorate's website.

Overall, the IRM researcher has not found an increase in the amount of information the inspectorates publish on the Internet. Furthermore, no efforts were undertaken to identify the types of information that are useful for citizens and businesses. Significant efforts are needed to map the flow of the procedures, decisions, and resolutions in order to establish an enabling environment for increasing (access to) available data. No

activities were undertaken to reform the policies that regulate the handling of information within the various inspectorates.

Did it matter?

The information held by various inspectorates is of great importance for citizens and the business community, as it refers to implementation of the legal framework and violations by various public institutions and companies. Such information is of public interest and promotes accountability, especially in a country where there is a weak implementation of the legislation.[20] However, the IRM review found limited progress, as inspectorates scarcely provide information, and only the state labour inspectorates provided findings from activities, illustrating which entities have some violations in the area of labour regulations and labour rights. Furthermore, the data are not provided in an open-data format, and theyare not updated regularly.

Moving forward

The IRM researcher recommends revision of this commitment based on the conditions and resources available within the inspectorates. As it works to improve the implementation of the aim of this commitment, the government should

1. make an analysis of the capacities and needs within each inspectorate;
2. conduct a citizens' survey and business sector assessment on the priority list of information;
3. develop and adopt a plan for gradual release of information, prioritising data based on consultation with stakeholders;
4. implement policy reform regarding collection, holding and release of data by inspectorates;
5. increase capacities of the inspectorates, including IT equipment, training of human resources and availability of web pages; and
6. identify clear milestones, activities, and outputs necessary to accomplish the aim of the commitment.

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[1] Ms. Irena Bojadzieva, MISA, Interview, Skopje, 04 October 2013.

[2] http://opendata.gov.mk

[3] http://www.finance.gov.mk/node/816

[4] http://www.mzsv.gov.mk/node/22 [In Macedonian]

[5] http://www.mls.gov.mk/content/?id=11 [In Macedonian]

[6] http://mtc.gov.mk/new_site/mk/storija.asp?id=2105 [In Macedonian]

[7] http://mtc.gov.mk/new_site/mk/storija.asp?id=2107 [In Macedonian]

[8] http://mtc.gov.mk/new_site/mk/storija.asp?id=2108 [In Macedonian]

[9] http://moeep.gov.mk [In Macedonian]

[10] Scarce data, all prior Macedonian joined the OGP. http://bit.ly/1fgQ4Zf [In Macedonian]

[11] http://zdravstvo.gov.mk/drzaven-sanitaren-zdravstven-inspektorat/ [In Macedonian]

[12] http://www.mioa.gov.mk/?q=node/2425 [In Macedonian]

[13] http://www.mzsv.gov.mk/node/21 [In Macedonian]

[14] List of available data online available at: http://www.mzsv.gov.mk/?q=opendata [In Macedonian]

[15] http://dpi.mon.gov.mk/ [In Macedonian]

[16] http://www.opendata.gov.mk/index.php/mk/open-data/organi-vo-sostav/dpi [In Macedonian]

[17] State Labor Inspectorate available at: http://dit.gov.mk/ [In Macedonian]

[18] IRM stakeholders' consultations with the business sector. 24 October 2013.

[19] http://www.opendata.gov.mk/index.php/mk/open-data/organi-vo-sostav/dit [In Macedonian]

[20] European Commission. 2013. Progress Report for Macedonia. http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/mk_rapport_2013.pdf

O6.M2: Introduce Integrity Systems for Anticorruption Policies in the Public Administration.

Introduce integrity systems in the public administration, including through relevant e-tools. Defining of the procedures for introduction of integrity policies/ anti-corruption policies in the institutions and adoption of methodology for introduction of integrity systems in the public administration.

Commitment Description		
Answerability	**Lead Institution**	State Commission for Corruption Prevention
	Supporting Institutions	None specified
	Point of Contact Specified?	No
Specificity and Measurability		Medium (Commitment language describes an activity that is objectively verifiable, but does not contain specific milestones or deliverables)
Relevance	**OGP Grand Challenges**	N/A
	OGP Values	Access to Information / Civic Participation / **Accountability √** / Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc. / None

Ambition	
New vs. Pre-existing	**Potential Impact**
New	Moderate (the commitment is a major step forward in the relevant policy area, but remains limited in scale or scope)

Level of Completion		
Start date: 7/12	**Actual completion**	Limited
End date: 12/14	**Projected completion**	Substantial

Next Steps
Further work on basic implementation

What happened?
The IRM researcher found limited implementation of this commitment.

While integrity systems in the pilot phase were introduced at local level (please see comments under objective 8, commitment 3, for more details), no activities have been undertaken to introduce integrity systems at the central level. The project conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) envisaged incorporation of one institution at central level for the piloting phase; however,it did not managed to ensure participation from one institution.[1]

The self-assessment of the government provides information regarding the introduction of systems of integrity in the public administration. In the middle of 2012, a working group was established by the Ministry of Justice for the purposes of amending the Law on Prevention of Corruption, which is planned to properly define the concept of the integrity system in public administration. This was confirmed during the IRM researcher's review where consulted stakeholders stressed that while it is not necessary to amend the legislation in order to introduce the integrity systems, it would create

political will for doing so. And while the State Commission for Prevention from Corruption is the responsible body in this area, in a request for free access to information regarding the status of the implementation of this OGP commitment, it has officially responded that it does not hold the requested information.[2]

In the reporting period, the IRM researcher did not find introduction of e-tools for prevention of corruption at central level, and while a methodology for introduction of integrity systems in the public administration was developed for the local level, it could be easily adapted for the state administration.

Did it matter?

Implementation of this commitment will contribute to strengthening preventive measures to curb corruption that remains prevalent in many areas and continues to be a serious problem. While the commitment introduces new measures, including e-tools, one needs to be aware of the fact that the implementation of existing legislation has yet to make a concrete impact and that the effectiveness of existing measures has to be improved.[3] Additionally, the administrative capacity of the relevant institutions remains insufficient, and the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, the Anti-Corruption Unit of the Ministry of Interior, and the State Audit Office remain inadequately staffed and funded.[4] Consulted stakeholders raised concern that if there is no body responsible for oversight and control of the integrity systems, this would hamper their development into an effective preventive anti-corruption mechanism.

Moving forward

The IRM researcher recommends further work on basic implementation of this commitment. As it works to continue implementation of this commitment, the government should:

1. assess which body should be charged with oversight and control of the integrity systems;
2. base the development of the integrity systems at national level on the experiences from the local level; and
3. ensure that broad consultations take place in the phase of the development of the methodology and integrity systems that include not only diverse actors from the state administration but also civil society and business sector.

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[1] Sonja Stefanovska-Trajanovska, UNDP, Interview, Skopje, 23 October 2013
[2] http://spinfo.org.mk [In Macedonian]
[3] European Commission. 2013. Progress Report for Macedonia. http://bit.ly/1di2ZZH
[4] Ibid

O7.M1: Open Budget initiative

Open Budget initiative. Release the budget as open data

Commitment Description		
Answerability — Lead Institution	Ministry of Finance	
Answerability — Supporting Institutions	None specified	
Answerability — Point of Contact Specified?	No	
Specificity and Measurability	High (Commitment language provides clear, measurable, verifiable milestones for achievement of the goal)	
Relevance — OGP Grand Challenges	N/A	

Relevance — OGP Values	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Accountability	Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.	None
	√				

Ambition	
New vs. Pre-existing	**Potential Impact**
New	Minor (the commitment is an incremental but positive step in the relevant policy area)

Level of Completion		
Start date: 7/12	**Actual completion**	Limited
End date: 12/15	**Projected completion**	Limited

Next Steps
Revision of the commitment to be more achievable or measurable

What happened?

The IRM researcher found limited implementation of this commitment. The goal pursued under the measure defined as "Open Budget Initiative" is publishing the state's annual budget as open-access information. Pursuant to the Law on Budgets,[1] the Budget of the Republic of Macedonia and the Budget's Final Balance are published only in the "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia." The Law on Budgets stipulates that only monthly briefs on the budget's execution and the semi-annual report on the budget's execution (first six months), prepared by the Ministry of Finance, shall be published on the ministry's website no later than 31 July in the current fiscal year. The Ministry of Finance's website hosts fiscal tables with data on the budget's spending in pdf format. Only the 2013 budget is in open format, but the amendments to the 2013 budget (i.e., budget adjustments) are published only in pdf format.

In addition, the website www.opendata.gov.mk, created in compliance with the OGP action plan, does not host any data in open format about the 2013 state budget and its adjustments.

The self-assessment does not contain information on the implementation of this measure, nor does it provide any reasoning for non-inclusion of this commitment in the assessment.

Did it matter?

OGP action plan anticipates publication of the state budget in open-access format.

This commitment implies an activity to be carried out on the part of the government that was not practiced in the past (i.e., until 2012, the annual state budget was not published as open-access information). Keeping in mind that Macedonia has been assessed with low 35 (out of 100) points in the 2012 Open Budget Survey developed by the International Budget Partnership.[2]This measure regards the minimum access enabled to budget information, implementation of this measure will be of great benefit. Macedonia's score is below the average score of 43 for all the 100 countries surveyed.[3]

The challenge identified in this regard is greater access to budget information, not merely open access to the adopted budget, notably because compared to the 2008 Open Budget Survey, four years later (in 2012) Macedonia is still among the 28 states in the world that have continued the same practices related to disclosure of budget information or even regressed in terms of access to this information. Therefore, the promotion of open access and participatory budget development, with due involvement of all stakeholders, including the civil society, will be crucial in the next period.[4]

Moving forward

IRM researcher recommends significant revision of the commitment to make it more achievable. In order to move government practice beyond the current baseline, future commitments might focus on

1. improving the quality of information which goes into the budget;
2. improving the quality of information on expenditure and outcomes from the budget; and
3. ensuring timely access to budget information in open-data formats.

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[1] [Law on Budgets], Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia no. 64/2005; 4/2008; 103/2008; 156/2009, 95/2010; 180/2011; 171/2012, http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/
[2] International Budget Partnership. 2012. Open Budget Survey 2012. http://internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/OBI2012-Report-English.pdf
[3] International Budget Partnership. 2012. Open Budget Index Score 2012. http://www.mkbudget.org/docs/OBI2012-MacedoniaCS-English.pdf
[4] Center for Economic Analysis. 2013. Citizens Budget. http://www.mkbudget.org/docs/OBI2012-MacedoniaCS-English.pdf

O7.M2: Public Procurements

Public Procurements. Continue the good record in transparency and openness of e-procurement and standardize the data to be qualified as open.

Commitment Description		
Answerability	**Lead Institution**	Bureau for Public Procurement
	Supporting Institutions	None specified
	Point of Contact Specified?	No
Specificity and Measurability		Medium (Commitment language describes an activity that is objectively verifiable, but does not contain specific milestones or deliverables)
Relevance	**OGP Grand Challenges**	N/A

Relevance	**OGP Values**	**Access to Information**	**Civic Participation**	**Accountability**	**Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.**	**None**
		√				

Ambition	
New vs. Pre-existing	**Potential Impact**
No (pre-existing)	Minor (the commitment is an incremental but positive step in the relevant policy area)

Level of Completion		
Start date: 7/12	**Actual completion**	Limited
End date: 12/14	**Projected completion**	Substantial

Next Steps
Revision of the commitment to be more achievable or measurable

What happened?

The IRM researcher found limited implementation of this commitment, while the self-assessment does not contain information on the implementation of this measure.

The Law on Public Procurement[1] stipulates that the process on public procurement contractawarding shall ensure transparency and integrity. The Bureau of Public Procurements, in the capacity of a state administration body established within the Ministry of Finance, is competent to ensure transparency in implementation of public procurements. This bureau is responsible for keeping, maintaining, and updating records on public procurement contracts, as well as making them publicly available in the Electronic Public Procurement System (EPPS).[2]

Nevertheless, reports developed by non-governmental organisations note that in the second quarter of 2013 (April–June) in as many as half of monitored public procurements the relevant tender documents were not published in EPPS, which is 10 percent less than the share of such procedures observed in the previous quarter.[3] Non-governmental organisations also note that in circumstances of exceptionally low competition in public procurements, reluctance to publish and make tender documents publicly available without imposing tender issuance fees does not stimulate more suppliers to submit their bids. Furthermore, transparency of the public procurement process was jeopardised by the fact that the portion of contracting authorities that did

not publish their tender documents in EPPS also refused to disclose them to the non-governmental organisations monitoring the public procurement process, even after the documents were requested under the Freedom of Information law.[4] However, in the reporting period the government stretched its efforts in the area and made available online on the EPPS procurements that were below 5,000 Euro, a threshold for conducting the procedure for public procurement, information which was previously not accessible by the public.

Public procurements are prone and conductive to malpractices and corrupt actions. The large scope of public funds allocated for this purpose results because participants have great interest in using public procurements for personal material gains and other benefits, notably by circumventing or violating legally stipulated procedures. Macedonia is the only country in the region and beyond that has not stipulated misdemeanor sanctions as part of its Law on Public Procurement, despite numerous recorded violations to legally stipulated procedures, criteria, and obligations committed by participants in public procurements, especially by contracting authorities.

Stakeholders raised concerns that the Law on Public Procurement does not contain a single anti-corruption provision or detailed provisions aimed at preventing possible conflict of interests among participants in public procurements. Participants in public procurements range from members of public procurements commissions, responsible officers, and other officers employed at contracting authorities and economic operators tasked with implementation of public procurements to members of the State Commission on Public Procurement Appeals. (The exception being the reference made to the Law on Prevention of Conflict of Interests, which contains general provisions and does not specify cases of conflict of interests in public procurements as stand-alone situations). Moreover, the Law on Public Procurement does not include legal solutions that would enable control of overall public procurement processes, as is the case with relevant legislation adopted in other countries.[5]

Did it matter?

The first component of the commitment for publication of tender documents in EPPS was established prior to the adoption of the OGP action plan. Improvements in terms of transparency should have taken place by publication of public procurements in open format, which actually constitutes the second component of this commitment. As stated above, the government now transparently publishes information about procurement below 5,000 Euro on EPPS. This was assessed as a positive measure by the stakeholders.

Currently, information hosted at EPPS's website is not open-source information. The bureau basically depends on data that are submitted to them by various institutions and publishes the information in a received format.[6] Additionally, EPPS as it is built could not be transformed into an open-data portal without significant restructuring. The reason provided to the IRM researcher at an interview was that the data contained at the EPPS and the system have been assessed as high risk, and that the stability and security of the system would be put into danger if it were connected to other data portals or made open.[7]Therefore, the part of the commitment related to data standardisation and publication in open format is not implemented (i.e., activities anticipated under this commitment have not been initiated).[8]

At the IRM consultation meeting, civil society organisations raised concern that procurement information is not posted on the official websites of relevant contracting authorities. They think this is important due to the fact that the EPPS's website is complex to navigate, and only an expert can browse and locate information on public procurements.[9] Moreover, the government needs to demonstrate tangible results in the reduction and deterrence of corruption in practice in the public procurement.[10]

Overall, while the EPPS website provides for transparent public procurement, there are problems with full compliance by all public authorities. Furthermore, opening the procurement information will allow for interested parties to analyse, cross reference, and compare data with other sources, allowing for prevention of corruptive practices.

Moving forward

The IRM recommends that this commitmentbe reformulated so that activities involving its implementation are identifiable and, therefore, measurable.

In order to move government practice beyond the current baseline, future commitments might focus on amending the legal framework to cover, for example, conflict of interest and to oblige contracting authorities to publish tender documents in open format.

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[1] Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia. Law on Public Procurement. N.136/2007, 130/2008, 97/2010, 53/2011, 185/2011, 15/2013, 148/2013 and 160/2013. http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/
[2] [Electronic system of public procurement]. https://e-nabavki.gov.mk/ [In Macedonian]
[3] Center for Civil Communications. 2013. 17 Quarterly Report on Monitoring the Implementation of Public Procurements in the Republic of Macedonia. http://bit.ly/1dTDH4g
[4] Ibid
[5] Ibid
[6] The following formats are supported to be uploaded on the EPPS: *.doc; *.txt; *.zip; *.pdf; *.jpg; *.jpeg; *.gif; *.odt; *.rar; *.xls; *.slk; *.xlw; *.csv; *.ppt; *.pps; *.docx; *.xlsx; *.pptx; *.ods
[7] Katerina Georgieva, Public Procurement Bureau, Interview, Skopje, 28 October 2013 and e-mail communication 25 November 2013.
[8] The Public Procurement Bureau. [Free Access to Information]. 2013. http://bit.ly/1gJna7Y
[9] IRM stakeholders consultation minutes
[10] European Commission. 2013. Progress Report for Macedonia. http://bit.ly/JMYHRA

O7.M3: Foreign Assistance and Foreign Investments

Foreign assistance and foreign investments. Consolidation of information and prioritization of the data that qualifies as open data.

Commitment Description						
Answerability	**Lead Institution**	Ministry of Finance				
	Supporting Institutions	Secretariat for European Affairs, Ministry of Economy and Agency for Foreign Investments Answerable party of office				
	Point of Contact Specified?	No				
Specificity and Measurability		Medium (Commitment language describes an activity that is objectively verifiable, but does not contain specific milestones or deliverables)				
Relevance	**OGP Grand Challenges**	N/A				
	OGP Values	**Access to Information**	**Civic Participation**	**Accountability**	**Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.**	**None**
		√				

Ambition	
New vs. pre-existing	**Potential Impact**
New	Minor (the commitment is an incremental but positive step in the relevant policy area);

Level of Completion		
Start date: 7/12	**Actual completion**	Limited
End date: 12/14	**Projected completion**	Substantial

Next Steps
Revision of the commitment to be more achievable or measurable

What happened?

The IRM researcher found limited implementation made on this commitment.

Under this measure, the state committed to consolidate the information and set the priority of data to be released as open-source data. The measure is comprised of two components: (a) foreign assistance, co-ordinated by the Secretariat for European Affairs (SEA) at the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, and the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Macedonia and (b) foreign investments.

The Secretariat for European Affairs has created an electronic Central Donor Assistance Database of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia[1] that enables registration of projects financed by means of non-refundable funds of foreign donors. In addition, the Ministry of Finance established the Central Financing and Contracting Department (CFCD) tasked with stable financial management of projects financed under Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) Components I–IV.[2] These databases were established and operational before Macedonia joined the Open Government Partnership.

The self-assessment report also does not contain information on the implementation of this measure. Furthermore, the IRM researcher's review found that no data are available for the foreign investments, and the stakeholders consulted did not know of any of the activities undertaken under this commitment.

Did it matter?

The component implying consolidation of data was in place prior to the adoption of the OGP action plan. Under Chapter 3.32, "Financial Control," of the National Program for the Adoption of the EU Acquis (NPAA), 2013 Revision,[3] the state anticipated ". . . nation-wide capacity building for management and utilisation of EU funds." NPAA also lists all projectsimplemented by the state with foreign assistance. While, the pre-existence of the measures is compliant with OGP declaration, the commitment does not make clear which problem it tried to solve or how it would move forward the existing government's efforts in the area.

As part of its response to the freedom of information request by civil society, the Ministry of Finance indicated that ". . . consolidation of information and setting priorities for open-source data is pursued in continuity."[4]However, the IRM researcher did not find open data on foreign assistance and foreign investments hosted on the website opendata.gov.mk.[5]

On the other hand, SEA responded that it released the data through the Central Donor Assistance Database.[6] Also, SEA's website hosts information on the bilateral assistance awarded to the state.[7] Nevertheless, the IRM researcher found an overview of the ongoing and planned foreign assistance for the period 2010–2012,[8] prepared by SEA but not published as open-source information.

In the IRM stakeholder consultations with CSOs, it was emphasised that they do not understand the progress that could be achieved with this measure. They stressed that it is unclear what type of data will be published in open format and that they were not consulted for the purpose of setting priorities in terms of open-source data.

Moving forward

IRM researcher recommends significant revision of the commitment to be more achievable.
Two main challenges remain for this commitment's full implementation. First, it is important to expandthe type and amount of data provided in the unified database. Second, additional efforts are needed in terms of consolidating and opening data on foreign investments, which are currently unavailable to the public.

[1] Secretariat for European Affairs. Central Donor Assistance Database of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia. http://cdad.sep.gov.mk/
[2] Ministry of Finance of Republic of Macedonia. Central Financing and Contracting Department . http://cfcd.finance.gov.mk/?lang=en
[3] Secretariat for European Affairs. [National Program for Adoption of the Acquis Communautaire – Revision 2013]. http://www.sep.gov.mk/data/file/NPAA/NPAA2013NarativenDel.pdf [In Macedonian]
[4] Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Macedonia. 2013. Response to request for free access to information. http://bit.ly/18ziQW1 [In Macedonian]
[5] http://www.opendata.gov.mk/index.php/mk/open-data/ministerstva/mf [In Macedonian]
[6] Secretariat for European Affairs. 2013. Response to request for free access to information. http://bit.ly/1kiXVsZ [In Macedonian]
[7] http://www.sep.gov.mk/en/content/?id=81
[8] http://bit.ly/1kW0LSl [In Macedonian]

O8.M1: Opening of Information by the Municipalities

Opening of information by the Municipalities. Opening data that stimulate competitiveness among the municipalities (better schools, living environment, safety of living, etc.)

Commitment Description		
Answerability	**Lead Institution**	The municipalities
	Supporting Institutions	Association of Local Self-government Unites and the Directorate for Personal Data Protection
	Point of Contact Specified?	No
Specificity and Measurability		Medium (Commitment language describes an activity that is objectively verifiable, but does not contain specific milestones or deliverables)
Relevance	**OGP Grand Challenges**	N/A

		Access to Information	**Civic Participation**	**Accountability**	**Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.**	**None**
Relevance	**OGP Values**					
		√				

Ambition	
New vs. Pre-existing	**Potential Impact**
Pre-existing	None (the commitment maintains the status quo)

Level of Completion		
Start date: 7/12	**Actual completion**	Not started
End date: 12/14	**Projected completion**	Substantial

Next Steps
Revision of the commitment to be more achievable or measurable

What happened?

IRM researcher found that the implementation of this commitment had not started. The aim pursued by the measure "open data on municipal level" is to stimulate competition between the municipalities in terms of better schools, better environment, safer community, and the like. Pursuant to the Law on Local Self-Government, the municipalities and the City of Skopje are obliged to provide information, free of charge, to the citizens about their operations, as well as on plans and programs pertaining to the municipality's development, in a manner defined in the statue of the municipality. They are also obliged to enable citizens' access to basic information on services provided by the municipalities.[1] The Strategy on ICT Development in the Municipalities 2011–2015 was adopted in 2010.[2]

Different types of local self-government units (LSGUs) exist in the Republic of Macedonia. For example, some LSGUs are located in rural environments and are characterised by a low level of ICT development and application. Many municipal administrations do not have established ICT sectors, lack adequate ICT infrastructure, and lack hardware and software, all of which further deepens the digital divide between big and developed municipalities on one side and small municipalities, usually rural, on the other.[3] In 2009, an analysis was made to identify the current ICT situation among LSGUs, which targeted 45 of the total of 85 municipalities. It concluded that many municipalities do not have ICT staff employed and a very small proportion of them had

established separate ICT departments or sectors. A large proportion of municipalities lacked ICT staff-signed contracts with local ICT companies or lacked experts for IT equipment and system maintenance and updating. It is important to note that all 45 municipalities are networked and the majority of them has servers; however, 70 percent of them reported that there is a need to strengthen their ICT infrastructure and hardware platforms.[4]

Nevertheless, the website www.opendata.gov.mk—created in compliance with the OGP action plan—does not host open-format data collections on information pertaining to the municipalities in Macedonia. Furthermore, the self-assessment report does not contain information on the implementation of this measure. The OGP focal person stated that the government cannot impose measures to be implemented by the municipalities, as part of the OGP, due to the decentralised competences.[5] On the other hand, municipalities were not included in the process of creation of the action plan, and while it is commendable that the action plan covers other branches of government, its implementation is hindered due to lack of ownership.

Did it matter?

Making information held by municipalities available is essential for citizens, as they hold many of the data important for them in various areas such as education, environment, transport, and the like. However, there is a big gap in resources, financial, human, and administrative, in order to ensure such access. The decentralisation process that was initiated in 2002 aimed at tackling this gap; however, municipalities still face major difficulties in managing their competences.[6] Therefore, significant efforts and resources are needed in order to ensure implementation of this commitment, efforts and resources that were not invested in the reporting period.

However, the commitment's implementation could have been supported by activity on the part of the government,implementation that was partially complied with within the period leading to 2012. Namely, the so-called e-permitting system (information system for issuing construction permits), supported by the Ministry of Transport and Communication of the Republic of Macedonia, allows citizens to submit 10 different types of applications related to the issuance of construction permits. On the one hand, in its essence, this system does not imply open data, but it enables electronic initiation and completion of all stages in the procedure. On the other hand, one of the expected results defined in the Strategy for ICT Development in the Municipalities is to ensure unhinderedremote access to services hosted on webservers designated for local services, access to information, resources, and applications. Therefore, the implementation of this system will provide a basis for implementation of the commitment.

In addition, the web portal "Right to Know"—established as a project implemented by a non-governmental organisation—hosts an interactive map for different categories of information about different LSGUs. Namely, the portal www.pravodaznaes.org.mk acts as a data resource for 15 categories of information (e.g., education, budget, culture, tourism, agriculture, etc.) concerning all municipalities in the Republic of Macedonia, including the City of Skopje. The graphic visualisation tool enables users to view particular sets of data for individual LSGUs and to compare different categories of data, as well as to research trajectories of data sets in a given time period.

Overall, it is positive that the government included measures in the action plan that cover local governments. And while the government cannot impose measures to be implemented by other branches of government, it can create an environment for their implementation by allocating additional resources for interested local governments that wish to comply with the action plan. The support could vary from providing technical assistance, to training,policy change, equipment, or financial resources.

Moving forward

The IRM researcher recommends significant revision of the commitment to be more achievable. In order to start the implementation of commitments made, in the forthcoming period, the competent authorities must focus on

1. raising awareness about OGP among local governments;
2. analysis of LSGUs' financial needs related to recruitment of ICT staff, or finding alternatives to allow ICT knowledge sharing and services among LSGUs;
3. allocation of financial means for additional ICT equipment and possible staff;
4. setting up a technical assistance program for interested LSGUs that want to support the implementation of the OGP action plan; and
5. aligning this commitment and measure with those anticipated under the Strategy for ICT Development in the Municipalities 2011–2015.

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[1] [Law on Local Self-Government], Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia no. 5/2002 http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/

[2] Associations of the Units of Local Self-Government of the Republic of Macedonia. 2010. [Strategy on ICT Development in the Municipalities 2011-2015]. http://bit.ly/1dr0CU6

[3] Associations of the Units of Local Self-Government of the Republic of Macedonia. 2010. [Strategy on ICT Development in the Municipalities 2011-2015]. http://bit.ly/1dr0CU6

[4] Associations of the Units of Local Self-Government of the Republic of Macedonia. 2010. [Strategy on ICT Development in the Municipalities 2011-2015]. http://bit.ly/1dr0CU6

[5] Irena Bojadzieva, MISA, Interview, Skopje, 4 October 2013.

[6] Many reports are available on the implementation of the decentralization process, both by the government and civil society. For more details please consult: Hristov G., Vrtevski J., & Ilijeva-Acevska N. 2011. *Decentralization at Standstill.* OSF-Macedonia. http://bit.ly/1eEpqxl

O8.M2: Free Access to Information Training Local self-government Officials

Training of the officials and secretaries of the Municipalities in order to ensure better implementation of the Law on Free Access to Public Character Information. Established in the practice so far in the implementation of the Law.

Commitment Description		
Answerability Lead Institution	Commission for Access to Public Character Information	
Supporting Institutions	Directorate for Personal Data Protection	
Point of Contact Specified?	No	
Specificity and Measurability	Medium (Commitment language describes an activity that is objectively verifiable, but does not contain specific milestones or deliverables)	
Relevance OGP Grand Challenges	N/A	

OGP Values	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Accountability	Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.	None
	√				

Ambition	
New vs. Pre-existing	**Potential Impact**
Pre-existing	Moderate (the commitment is a major step forward in the relevant policy area, but remains limited in scale or scope)

Level of Completion		
Start date: 7/12	**Actual completion**	Limited
End date: 12/14	**Projected completion**	Substantial

Next Steps
New commitment building on existing implementation

What happened?

The IRM researcher found limited implementation of this commitment.

Pursuant to the Law on Free Access to Public Information, the Commission for Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information is responsible for education-related matters (i.e., to organise and deliver training for information-mediation officers).[1] In 2012, the commission identified 1,253 information holders. In the first implementing year of the OGP action plan, the commission organised only two training sessions, but it did not include officers from local level institutions.[2] The commitment describes the need for training the secretaries of the municipalities,despite the fact that they are not official persons charged with a responsibility to handle free access to information requests, to fill requests for information created or held by the municipalities in accordance with their competences. However, their awareness about the right to information, as well as authorisation is necessary for full compliance with the Law on Free Access to Public Information, and therefore, the commitment is very relevant.

The self-assessment report contains information on the realisation of this measure, concerning the training sessions organised and delivered in the course of 2012; however,this was prior to the adoption of the OGP action plan. It was indicated that—in co-operation and with financial assistance from donors—the commission managed to deliver 15 training sessions and 15 workshops for 227 information mediation officers, citizens' associations and foundations, media outlets, and councilors from local governments.

Did it matter?

The obligation related to the training of officials at local level institutions was present even before the action plan, notably as an obligation anticipated in the 2006 Law on Free Access to Public Information. The second part of the obligation for training secretaries of the municipalities is an added value to raise knowledge and awareness of the officials at the local level for implementation of the Law on Free Access to Information.

Nevertheless, the manner in which this commitment is envisioned in the action plan can contribute to increased efforts on the part of the state with a view to allocate more funds to support the commission's operation. This will contribute to addressing the challenge faced by the commission concerning the training of newly appointed information mediation officers at information holders who are replacing officers who have already been trained.

Civil society organisations reported that in 2012,a greater number of cases of mute refusal was observed at the local level.[3] Notably, from a total of 255 information requests submitted to local self-government units (City of Skopje and municipalities in the Republic of Macedonia) administrations, there was no response in 106 cases (41.6 percent).[4] Given that the decentralisation process aims to bring local governments "closer" to the citizens, and it worksto solve their problems, the high level of non-responsiveness on the part of local self-governments is not conducive to attaining this goal.

Additionally, citizens are not aware that they have the right to access information, and they still perceive the state as secretive and not transparent.[5] Furthermore, the information holders are aware that citizens have limited knowledge of or are unaware of the Law on Free Access to Public Information. Therefore, it is necessary to expand the scope and coverage of this commitment to support citizens and raise their awareness on the right to access information, as well as the OGP in general.

Moving forward

The IRM researcher recommends a new commitment building on existing implementation.
In order to continue with the implementation of, but also to expand, this training-related commitment to secretaries of the municipalities, the government should

1. allocate more funds in the commission's operational budget, thereby enabling it to implement training sessions that would not depend on donor funds in addition to enabling recruitment of employees in the commission. This will also enable it to efficiently implement the competences it has been entrusted with by law;
2. propose policy changes, thereby enabling adoption of a bylaw that would govern the issue of training for secretaries of the municipalities;
3. develop, in partnership with local self governments, a plan for gradual proactive disclosure of sets of data held by LSGUs and public institutions at a local level; and

4. design and support information and awareness raising campaign, in co-operation with the local civil society.

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[1] Law on Free Access to Information of Public Character, Official Gazette No. 13/2006, 86/2008, 6/2010, http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/

[2] Oliver Serafimovski, Cveta Trajkovska, Zorz Popovski, Commission for Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information, IRM Interview, Skopje, 25 October 2013.

[3] Foundation Open Society – Macedonia. 2013. Six Years Later: Is the Wall of Silence Cracking? Analysis of the Implementation of the Law on Free Access to Public Information.

[4] Ibid

[5] Foundation Open Society – Macedonia. 2013. Overcoming the Principles of Secrecy in the Public Administration's Operation; Report from the research study on the right to public information in Macedonia. http://www.fosm.mk/en/Home/Publications?catID=9&additionalID=65

O8.M3: Integrity system on Local Level

Introduce integrity system on local level and use the open information for the benefit of the integrity systems.

1. Establish methodology for introduction of integrity systems on local level.

2. Piloting of the integrity systems in at least 10 municipalities.

Commitment Description		
Answerability	**Lead Institution**	State Commission for Prevention of Corruption
	Supporting Institutions	The municipalities and Association of Local Self-government Unites
	Point of Contact Specified?	No
Specificity and Measurability		High (Commitment language provides clear, measurable, verifiable milestones for achievement of the goal)
Relevance	**OGP Grand challenges**	N/A

	OGP Values	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Accountability	Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.	None
				√		

Ambition	
New vs. Pre-existing	**Potential Impact**
New	Moderate (the commitment is a major step forward in the relevant policy area, but remains limited in scale or scope)

Level of Completion		
Start date: 7/12	**Actual completion**	Substantial
End date: 12/14	**Projected completion**	Substantial

Next Steps
Revision of the commitment to be more achievable or measurable

What happened?

IRM researcher found substantial implementation of this commitment.

Integrity systems represent a platform of policies and practices that should ensure transparent and accountable administration. The introduction of an integrity system is a new measure for the country, and its inclusion in the OGP action plan provides a framework for further promotion of the approach. It builds on detailed analysis of the status of integrity in the public sector conducted while the action plan was being drafted.[1]

The self-assessment reports that the findings alongside the comparative experiences within the region were used by the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption to develop a concept for system integrity.This has a focus on local government administration and is in accordance with the fundamental principles of the legal system already implemented in the country.[2]The concept represents a mechanism for preventing corruption and identifying corruption risks within institutions. The model consists of elements related to introduction of policies and procedures that will serve to prevent corruption and strengthen ethical behavior in local administration.[3] Furthermore, starting at the end of 2012 and continuing in 2013, the model of the

integrity system was piloted in nine municipalities,[4] which also received training to assist them in internalising and implementing the integrity concept and communicating the concept to the public.

The following elements of the integrity system were implemented in the pilot municipalities in the reporting period:[5]

1. Establishment of a working group for integrity assigned by the mayor whose responsibility was to co-ordinate the process of implementing the integrity model in the municipalities and its evaluation.
2. Development of an anti-corruption policy (Integrity Policy) of the municipality by the working group for integrityand its official adoption by the mayor. The anti-corruption policy clearly indicates the rules and principles for ethical and non-corruptive behavior of the local administration.
3. Establishment of mechanisms for citizens' reporting of corruption to the municipality, and an internal reporting system within the municipality via an established direct phone line and e-mail contact all of which goes to an individual who has been assignedthis responsible.
4. Development of an internal procedure and template for reporting, processing, and recording necessary information related to reported cases of corruption.

This commitment was also strongly endorsed by civil society in the targeted municipalities. CSOs partnered with municipalities to support development of new accountability and transparency tools, founded on ICT and social media. A total of four projects have been supported so far that focus on public participation, energy consumption, and a reporting mechanism for infrastructure and utility problems.[6]

Furthermore, outreach activities were organised in eight pilot municipalities. These were organised to informcitizens and raise their awareness about the new mechanisms for citizen-government interaction that contributes to increased transparency of the local government and to reduced opportunities for corruption. The message was reinforced with the official signing of the anti-corruption policy by the mayors. This was proof of commitment from municipal top management for implementing the rules and standards described in the document towards introduction of an integrity system and of preventive anti-corruption measures. However, CSOs participating in the IRM stakeholders meeting were not aware of the measures being implemented. This might be due to the fact that the process is in its early phase and results are still to come;the fact that most of the participating CSOs work on a national level, while the measures were implemented locally; or the fact that they cannot link some of the activities which they recognise as part of a wider integrity platform.

Additionally, a methodology was designed by the UNDP for measuring responsibility, transparency, and accountability at a local level. It is a simple and practice-oriented instrument. Apart from measuring accountability and transparency in the three selected areas most prone to corruption (financial management, urban planning, and public procurement), the application of the methodology aims to create a culture of critical and objective self-assessment that can be applied to all processes taking place in the municipal administrations. The methodology offers guidelines for adapting the tool to thelocal context, specifically with regards to defining corruption hotspots and developing indicators for local anti-corruption mechanisms. In particular, the index is designed to make measurable assessments of the capacity of a given institution to combat corruption by identifying those points most vulnerable to corruption, the specific mechanisms that can be used to prevent corruption, indicators measuring the effectiveness of these mechanisms, and criteria to score these indicators.[7] The methodology will be piloted in the nine municipalities in the future.

Did it matter?

It is certain that the integrity system introduced in Macedonia addresses the biggest weakness of integrity approaches taken in the region: failure to include a monitoring and evaluation system. And while it is still early to assess the effects of this commitment, social accountability tools might be helpful in quantification of the results so far. On one hand, the dialogue for preventing corruption and conflict of interest has been strengthened and the process provides for an enabling environment for greater participation from civil society, business, and media.[8] On the other hand, the conducted assessment and field analysis of the current level of transparency and accountability at the local level showed that there are huge gaps that prevent civil society from effectively participating in monitoring the overall financial and administrative performance of local government units. In addition to this, the lack of proactiveness from the side of civil society in terms of demanding accountability of the local government, is also an indication of weakness in the citizen-state relation and affects the quality of service delivery to the citizens.[9]

And while there are commitments from local authorities, implementation is faced with different capacities, openness, and attitudes within various institutions. Some of the challenges identified by stakeholders include resistance; lack of information and knowledge of possible actions; different understanding of the legal framework; principles of good governance; and incoherence within the institutional answers. On the other hand, the lack of support and participation from the Association of Local Self Government Units raises concerns regarding the sustainability and possibility of a spill-over effect of the pilot program. Furthermore, while the commitment's implementation is in an advanced phase, the IRM researcher found that there is imbalance in the funding of the activities, which are disproportionately (solely) funded by foreign donors, through UNDP.

Moving forward

The IRM researcher recommends revision of the commitmentbased on the implementation and achieved results.In the future, it is crucial that the commitment describes the anticipated problems and defines clear activities, milestones, and timeframes for addressing them. In particular, the following elements can be useful:

1. Review the assessment methodology, based on the piloting results, to ensure clear indicators, data collection processes, and responsible authorities for evaluation and policy reform based on findings.
2. Consider how the assessment methodology can be adapted to include general indicators of openness and provide for systematic and continuous instruments for measurement of OGP related efforts.
3. Ensure that the assessment infrastructure is designed in a participatory way and that civil society and the business sector participate in it.
4. Invest in capacity-building measures, such as training and peer learning.

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[1] Sonja Stefanovska-Trajanovska, UNDP, Interview, Skopje, 23 October 2013
[2] Government of Republic of Macedonia. 2013. "Self-Assessment of the Implementation of Action Plan". Skopje: MISA. http://bit.ly/18ABVHC [in Macedonian]
[3] UNDP Background information for the measure, unpublished document provided to the IRM researcher.
[4] The Municipalities of: Petrovec, Veles, Kocani, Kratovo, Gevgelija, Strumica, Gostivar, Brvenica and Aerodrom
[5] Ibid, UNDP Background document.
[6] The following is a short description of the projects. (1) Green Box NGO is supported in creation of android application and website that will provide transparency of the expenses allocated for energy consumption of municipalities. (2) Focus NGO [www.prioriteti.fokus.org.mk] developed an online service in order to help citizens to get regularly important information from the public hearings, including official decisions from the Municipal Councils, and introducing open online voting system. (3) European Link Center [www.komunavrapcisht.info] developed an interactive web page which should ensure increased

participation of the citizens and NGO's in the decision making process. (4) YES Foundation [Vidi.Prijavi.Popravi] is a web and mobile applications that allows citizens to report infrastructure and utility defects, and authorities to respond.

[7] Ibid, UNDP Background document.

[8] State Commission for Prevention of Corruption. 2013. Annual Report for the Work of the Commission for 2012. http://www.dksk.org.mk/images//godisenizvestaj2012.pdf [In Macedonian]

[9] Ibid, UNDP Background document.

O9.M1: Promotion of Consumers Information in Selected Areas.

Increased responsibility and promotion of the informed consumers and citizens-users of rights and services concept. Inform the consumers and citizens-users of services and rights in areas such as health, education, food, energy efficiency, fuel efficiency, environment protection, financial services, services in the area of social protection and showing information according to gender.

Commitment Description		
Answerability	**Lead Institution**	Ministry of economy
	Supporting Institutions	Other institutions (not specified)
	Point of Contact Specified?	No
Specificity and Measurability		Low (Commitment language describes activity that can be construed as measurable with some interpretation on the part of the reader)
Relevance	**OGP Grand Challenges**	N/A

	OGP Values	**Access to Information**	**Civic Partici pation**	**Accounta bility**	**Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.**	**None**
		√				

Ambition	
New vs. Pre-existing	**Potential Impact**
New	Minor (the commitment is an incremental but positive step in the relevant policy area)

Level of Completion		
Start date: 7/12	**Actual completion**	Limited
End date: 12/14	**Projected completion**	Susbtantial

Next Steps
Further work on basic implementation

What happened?

The IRM researcher found limited progress on this commitment. The government in its self-assessment report does not contain information about progress in the implementation of this measure, and consulted stakeholders did not have any information about the progress, but they felt that overall, there is lack of information regarding consumer protection, and claimed that the level of consumer awareness is low. They also complained that the Organization for Consumers' Protection lacks trust and presence in the public.[1]

At the end of July 2013, the Organization for Consumers' Protection sponsored by the Ministry of Economy published three informational brochures. While the brochures were published after the reporting period, their preparation was conducted within the first year of the implementation of OGP. The brochures target the following rights: (1) consumer rights and touristic travel,(2) what is and how to recognise unfair market behavior, and (3) consumer rights and consumer loans.[2] While the scope and themes covered by the publication do not match the specific areas identified with the

commitment (health, education, food, energy efficiency, fuel efficiency, environment protection, financial services, and services in the area of social protection), this is a step forward in the area. Additionally, two informational brochures were published by the Organization for Consumers'Protection, in December 2012[3] and June 2013,[4] as part of its annual program funded by the Ministry of Economy. CSOs raised concerns that the available information is provided only in the Macedonian language, which is insufficient for a country with a large minority that speaks the Albanian language.

No statistical information regarding consumers' violations is published (including gender desegregated data). The website of the Ministry of Economy is not regularly updated.[5]

Did it matter?

The OGP action plan could significantly move forward the practice of the government of the responsible bodies; however, so far the practice has remained at the level prior to the OGP.Consumer problems are widespread; a recent study of legal needs revealed that thisis the second most common problem faced by citizens, with more than one in six respondents (17,4%). The most common consumer problems were consumer fraud or defective goods or services, including fake guarantees, which were reported by every tenth respondent. Other common problems were consumers signing contracts without understanding them or getting into a dispute over conditions in consumer contracts and not getting goods and services for which they have agreed upon and paid.[6] Therefore, it is important that the government increases the scope of information proactively released, especially regarding the violations, measures undertaken, and available mechanisms for protection.

Moving forward

IRM recommends further work on basic implementation. Specifically, the government should

1. increase the scope of the provided information;
2. start with the regular proactive release of administrative and statistical gender disaggregated data held by the Ministry of Economy and Organization for Consumers Protection and also information concerning reported violations, measures undertaken, and existing mechanisms; and
3. consider publishing information in other languages used by the citizens in Macedonia.

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[1] Minutes of IRM stakeholders' consultation forum. See, http://bit.ly/19C3wpY.
[2] Ministry of Economy. 2013. Consumer Rights during Touristic Travel. What is and How to Recognize Unfair Market Behavior. Consumer Rights and Consumer Loans. http://bit.ly/1bMOrBV [In Macedonian]
[3] Organization for Consumers Protection. 2012. Consumers Brochure No.23. http://bit.ly/1cyhiaB [In Macedonian]
[4] Organization for Consumers Protection. 2013. Consumers Brochure No.24. http://bit.ly/1kRkIK1 [In Macedonian]
[5] http://economy.gov.mk
[6] Korunovska Neda, Srbijanko Jana and Maleska Tanja. 2013. Legal Needs and Paths to Justice in the Republic of Macedonia. Open Society Foundation – Macedonia. http://bit.ly/19Pm1E6

O9.M2: Availability of Information Related to: Roads Safety, Air Quality, Safety of Workers

Improved availability and quality of information related to: roads safety, air quality, safety of workers, etc. The harmonization of the regulatory information will support fair and consistent implementation of important regulatory obligations. This information should be publicly available, easy accessible including the possibility for download and internet search.

Commitment Description						
Answerability	**Lead Institution**	Ministry of economy				
	Supporting Institutions	Other institutions (not specified)				
	Point of Contact Specified?	No				
Specificity and Measurability		Low (Commitment language describes activity that can be construed as measurable with some interpretation on the part of the reader)				
Relevance	**OGP grand challenges**	N/A				
	OGP Values	**Access to Information**	**Civic Participation**	**Accounta bility**	**Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.**	**None**
		√				
Ambition						
New vs. Pre-existing	**Potential Impact**					
New	Minor (the commitment is an incremental but positive step in the relevant policy area)					
Level of Completion						
Start date: 7/12	**Actual completion**	Limited				
End date: 12/14	**Projected completion**	Substantial				
Next Steps						
Revision of the commitment to be more achievable or measurable						

What happened?

The IRM researcher found that the implementation of this commitment was limited. While the self-assessment of the government does not discuss progress on this commitment, the IRM researcher found that the government practice has not moved forward after the inclusion of this commitment in the OGP action plan.

Daily information about air quality are published regularly by the Ministry for Environmental Protection and Urban Planning,[1] but this information is not in open format or searchable. Furthermore, the Ministry of Interior published at the beginning of 2013 a summary of information about the traffic accidents in 2012 and their consequence; however, there is no regular release of data on this issue.[2] There are no data released by the Republic Council on Road Traffic Safety, nor is there an annual report for their work available for 2012.[3] Information about safety of workers is not available, either on the Ministry of Economy or the State Labour Inspectorate. The IRM

researcher found that the inspectorate has not published any information regarding the safety of workers.

CSO consultations raised questions about the suitability of the responsible institution for this commitment. While the Ministry of Economy is responsible for consumer rights, the targeted information relates to the competences of other institutions, such as the Ministry of Interior and the Republic Council on Road Traffic Safety in the area of road safety, the Ministry for Environmental Protection and Urban Planning in the areas of air quality, and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and State Labour Inspectorate in the area of safety of workers. Those institutions are not listed as supporting institutions in the OGP action plan, and the Ministry of Economy itself when asked about the status of the implementation of the commitment, referred CSOs to the Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning for further information,[4] raising a question on the competences it has in this area.

The IRM researcher found no evidence that suggests harmonisation of the regulatory information was achieved.

Did it matter?
The OGP has not positively influenced the accessibility and quantity of available information in the area of road safety, air quality, or workers safety. While there is a general lack of information proactively released (except in the case of air quality), the released data are not provided in an open format or searchable. The status in the area has remained at status quo, or has slidback (e.g., lack of annual reports on the Republic Council on Road Traffic Safety, or lack of any information about the safety of workers).

Moving forward
IRM recommends significant revision of the commitment to make it is more achievable and measurable. When doing so, the government should

1. consider which institutions should be made responsible for the implementation;
2. analyse the gaps needing to be overcome in order to ensure regular proactive release of data in the targeted areas;
3. develop a road map specifying activities, and measure to overcome the identified gaps; and
4. design mechanism for monitoring implementation, in co-operation withcivil society and the business sector.

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[1] http://moeep.gov.mk [In Macedonian]
[2] The reports can be accessed at: http://bit.ly/1bMW37s [In Macedonian]
[3] http://www.rsbsp.org.mk/en/zarsbsp.asp
[4] http://spinfo.org.mk [In Macedonian]

O9.M3: Public Health Information

Public health protection. Identify the data and information that will contribute towards better information of the citizens about the situation relevant for their health, health information and statistics

Commitment Description						
Answerability	**Lead Institution**	Ministry of health				
	Supporting Institutions	None specified				
	Point of Contact Specified?	No				
Specificity and Measurability		Low (Commitment language describes activity that can be construed as measurable with some interpretation on the part of the reader)				
Relevance	**OGP Grand Challenges**	N/A				
	OGP Values	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Accounta bility	Tech & Innovation for Trans. & Acc.	None
		√				
Ambition						
New vs. Pre-existing		**Potential Impact**				
New		None (the commitment maintains the status quo)				
Level of Completion						
Start date: 7/12		**Actual completion**	Complete			
End date: 12/14		**Projected completion**	Substantial			
Next Steps						
New commitment building on existing implementation						

What happened?

The IRM researcher found that this commitment has been completed.

Policy reforms in the area of health have been implemented by the government in the last couple of years,which, among other things, included the policy reform in the types of health-related information that needs to be collected and the scope of the data collected. In the area of public health data, two major legislative reforms were introduced with the Law on Public Health[1] and the Law on Health Records.[2]These introduced new categories of health data, categorised in a total of 35 health registries, compared to only four registers that existed prior to 2009.

With this, certain health information and statistics have been identified as information and types of data that will contribute towards better information for citizens about the situation relevant for their health. While these have yet to be implemented, preparatory activities were underway during the reported period. The self-assessment report does not reflect the government's efforts under this commitment.

Did it matter?

The introduction of legal reforms in public health significantly contributed to the identification and widening of the scope of the health information and health-related

data collected in the country. However, the implementation is delayed, and consulted CSOs suggested that due to lack of capacity and resources, the country should consider prioritising information and gradual introducing reforms in terms of health statistics collection.[3]Furthermore, the Institute for Public Health of the Republic of Macedonia, which is the authorised holder of the health statistics from the health records,[4] should have been involved in the OGP. Currently, the public has access to the health data proactively released by the institute through its publications: annual reports, health maps, and health of the population; however, these are not updated regularly.[5] Furthermore, CSOs pointed to the good example of participatory decision making throughout the implementation of the reforms led by Ministry of Health, which has been stalled from 2012 but should serve as a great basis for further participatory processes conducted in this area.[6] Implementation of the new legal and policy reform will significantly move the country forward in this area.

Moving forward

The IRM researcher recommends building new commitments that are focused on the implementation of the new legal framework in the areas of health records. In this process, the government should

1. design activities to support the implementation of the Law on Health Records, including strengthening of human resources and setting clear milestones and targets;
2. consider gradual implementation with defined phased introduction of new health records; and
3. reflect on the benefits from the work of the Committee for Healthcare System Advancement and reinvigorate participatory mechanisms that could help guide, monitor, and evaluate the progress.

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[1] Law on Public Health, published in the Official Gazette No. 22/2010 and 136/2011

[2] Law on Health Records, published in the Official Gazette No. 20/2009, 53/2011 and 164/2013

[3] Ms. Neda Milevska, CSO Studiorum, IRM Interview, Skopje,18 November 2013

[4] Article 5, Law on Health Records

[5] Institute for Public Health of the Republic of Macedonia http://www.iph.mk/

[6] Chichevalieva Snezana and Milevska Neda. 2012. Participatory Democracy in Public Health: Committee for Healthcare System Advancement. Euro Dialog No.17 http://bit.ly/IV6Pib

V. SELF-ASSESSMENT

The government self-assessment reflects the consultations; there is no appraisal of the efficiency of the consultations, or suggestions on how to improve the consultation process in future.

The government self–assessment was published on 25 September 2013.[1]The public had a two-week period to submit comments, but no feedback was received on time from the business sector, academic community or the civil society. However, afterwards two CSOs provided independent assessments of the OGP efforts in the first year, these reports were not incorporated in the assessment; but they were taken into consideration by the IRM researcher. While the government self-assessment reflects the consultations, there is no appraisal of the efficiency of the consultations, or suggestions how to improve the consultation process in future.

The report contains an update in four out of nine programmatic areas, and it is structured differently than the action plan, which makes it difficult to compare the two government documents. This was stressed at the consultation forums. The self-assessment does not provide information for the vast majority of the commitments, some information falls outside the prescribed review period, and there is no reason provided for why all action plan commitments were not covered. Overall, while the report reaffirms responsibility for openness, it does not assess completion according to schedule, does not describe the relationship of the action plan to OGP grand challenge areas, and the report does not make an effort to evaluate whether the OGP further stretched government's efforts for transparency. The report also does not identify challenges to further facilitating government openness.

Table 2: Self-Assessment Checklist

Was annual progress report published?	Yes
Was it done according to schedule?	Yes
Is the report available in the local language?	Yes
According to stakeholders, was this adequate?	Yes
Is the report available in English?	Yes
Did the government provide a two-week public comment period on draft self-assessment reports?	Yes
Were any public comments received?	Yes
Is the report deposited in the OGP portal?	Yes
Did the self-assessment report include review of the consultation efforts?	Yes
Did the report cover all of the commitments?	No
Did it assess completion according to schedule?	No
Did the report reaffirm responsibility for openness?	Yes

Does the report describe the relationship of the action plan with grand challenge areas?	No

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[1] http://bit.ly/18ABVHC

VI: MOVING FORWARD

This section puts the OGP action plan into a broader context and highlights potential next steps, as reflected in the preceding sections, as well as stakeholder-identified priorities.

Country Context

The Republic of Macedonia implemented numerous activities for improving the efficiency and transparency of state institutions. This was done for enhancing transparency and access to information, fighting against corruption, and providing high-level quality services to citizens and businesses through usage of technology and innovations. By joining the Open Government Partnership, the government of the Republic of Macedonia pledged to continually improve its performance on the foundations of open, transparent, reliable, and efficient government institutions that communicate and co-operate with citizens.[1]

Access to Information

Right to information as a foundation of good governance, increased transparency, and meaningful civil participation in public life is treated as a fundamental human right.[2] Similarly, the 1991 Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia stipulates that "free access to information and the freedom of reception and transmission of information are guaranteed"[3] as part of fundamental rights enjoyed by the citizens. Fifteen years later, on 25 January 2006, the Parliament adopted the Law on Free Access to Public Information (FOI Law). Its enforcement officially started on 1st September 2006.

In early 2010, the law was subject to significant changes, which resulted in an improved legal framework that guarantees the right to information and is aligned with international and European standards. Although the legal framework is assessed as satisfactory, the implementation remains deficient. Exceptions worded in the access to public information law are vague, leaving an area for arbitrary interpretation. The sanctions set out in the law are also unclear and are not applied in practice.[4] Furthermore, the Republic of Macedonia has not introduced a regular monitoring system, although the law has been implemented for more than seven years. Thus, on one hand, no statistics are kept by the public bodies on the number of information requests received;[5] on the other hand, annual reports that should be submitted to the commission and should serve as basis for assessing the overall situation are not adequately compiled or are not submitted.[6] Additionally, significant numbers of citizens are still unaware of their right to free access to information held by public bodies.[7] Silent refusals remain the biggest obstacle to the administration's transparency.

Public Participation

The Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia provides for the inclusion of citizens in policy-making, and more specifically, it stipulates, "the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia exercise their authority through democratically elected representatives, through referendum and through other forms of direct expression."[8] Furthermore, the Constitution prescribes, "every citizen has a right to petition state and other public bodies, as well as to receive an answer. A citizen cannot be called to account or suffer adverse consequences for attitudes expressed in petitions, unless they entail the committing of a criminal offence."[9]

The right to public participation is further regulated with the legislative framework governing the work of the administration. In addition, the government adopted the Guidebook for Policy Creation that stresses public participation.[10] The government believes that one of the most significant aspects of transparent governance in society is co-operation with interested parties and civil society in creating the legislation, as well as undertaking the necessary measures to stimulate and enhance civil participation. An independent civil society assessment of openness and inclusion of the public in legislative processes concluded that the institutional and financial environment for inclusion of the public is unsatisfactory. It also found that the openness of the process for preparation of specific acts is insufficient.[11] Public participation was part of the specific goals of two recent strategies adopted by the government for co-operation with civil society.[12] These strategies, adopted in 2012, declare areas for improvement that required specific measures to be developed in the future:

1. Proactive involvement of civil society organisations in the processes of decision-making and European integration, especially in the preparation and harmonisation of national development plans, operational programs, and other strategic documents;
2. Promoting the involvement of civil society organisations in implementation of the activities of the state administration in accordance with their portfolio and participation in policy-level decision making;
3. Transfer of public competences to civil society organisations and developing public-private partnerships as an opportunity for promoting and strengthening co-operation.

Accountability and Integrity
New accountability mechanisms have been initiated since the adoption of the OGP action plan, discussed in detailed in the Section IV of this report. Furthermore, the government is currently in the process of revising several of its relevant legal frameworks including public procurement, whistle-blower protection, and conflict of interest. However, the legal framework for public administration continues to be fragmented, affecting its unity, transparency, and accountability.[13] Additionally, civil society and the international community raised serious concerns regarding the capacity of the country to enforce the rule of law. One clear example of this concern was the failure of the Parliament to exercise oversight over the executive branch after the forcible removal of a large number of opposition MPs and journalists from Parliament's plenary hall on 24 December. This happened during the adoption of the 2013 budget under controversial circumstances.[14] Civil society organisations, especially human rights defenders, question the capacity for accountability of the state authorities after the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights, on 13 December 2012, delivered judgment in the case El-Masri *vs.* Macedonia. The court found multiple violations of the European Convention,[15] holding the state responsible for abducting Mr. El-Masri and subjecting him to inhuman and degrading treatment. It also found the state responsible for failing to prevent his torture and his forced disappearance by Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) agents, failing to effectively investigate his complaints, and failing to provide him with a remedy for the violations of his rights.

Technology for Openness and Accountability
The Open Government Partnership strongly impacts the innovations, development, and competitiveness of the economy. A novel focus arising from the OGP was the idea of

open data, which is strongly reflected in the action plan. Four out of the nine thematic priorities focus on open data and use of technology.

Current Stakeholder Priorities

Two sets of measures were identified by stakeholders as most important in the current action plan: those related to participatory policy-making and those related to improvement of access to information, including open data. In the course of this IRM review, stakeholders also expressed concern about the lack of overview in the plan on the achievement made prior OGP, which would be used as a baseline for measuring progress. Finally, CSOs were arguing for improving the structure of the Open Government Partnership that should be inclusive to civil society and the business community. In particular, among the most significant measures crucial for further implementation, stakeholders identified the following:

1. The increased use of the digital platform for online consultation ener.gov.uk
2. The introduction of integrity systems at the local level
3. The promotion of open data
4. The focus on the importance of the public interest (harm) test as a requirement before denying public information

The areas that gave rise to concern included the following:

1. Resource allocation for the implementation of the OGP commitments
2. Open data availability and standards
3. Progress on long-standing commitments to proactively publish information, to develop inventories of data by public authorities, and to tackle mute refusals
4. Consultation with civil society in decision-making processes
5. Access to micro data held by the State Statistical Office
6. Delay in the introduction of an integrity system at national level

Future Stakeholder Priorities

Also, stakeholders pointed to a number of priority areas not reflected in the current action plan that they suggest could be included in the next action plan. New commitment policy areas include

1. Performance of government websites
2. Public spending transparency
3. Political party financing
4. Whistle-blower protections
5. Access to spatial and environmental data
6. Development and spreading of best practices in public participation

In the course of the IRM review, it was evident that the first action plan was not built on consultations and discussions with multiple stakeholders, and their experience was not utilised. Furthermore, there is an evident lack of enthusiasm among civil society about the OGP and its potential. Only a few of those consulted were engaged in the process of its development of the action plan, and apart from two or three organisations, the action plan has not been used by civil society to advance the status in their respective sectors covered by the action plan. Most of them were not aware of its existence while the rest were discouraged to participate due to proliferation of various strategies that commonly lack implementation. Therefore, CSOs insisted that more public awareness raising activities about the OGP are needed in general, but also about the measures and their implementation, especially under the first objective that focuses on participatory policy-making. Overall, stakeholders emphasised the need for empowerment of citizens and civil society as vital for the future period.

General Overview of action plan

The first action plan was composed of 35 measures defined for attainment of nine objectives. The implementation of the measures is entrusted to a total of 30 competent institutions indicated as implementing organisations or partners. And while a great number of institutions are responsible for implementing OGP, OGP-related reform lacks a multi-stakeholders forum, which hinders information flow and co-operation. The action plan rarely describes the problems it tries to resolve, making it difficult to assess its ambition and relevance to the OGP values. While some of the activities are technical and specific, most of them are general without clear milestones and timelines. In other words, OGP guidelines emphasise that all national action plans must contribute to resolution of the five grand challenges. When the Macedonian action plan was developed, the authorities should have identified previous measures taken and results achieved, in order to allow straightforward and objective assessment of progress made under each commitment individually. However, the Macedonian action plan does not contain indicators against which progress will be measured, meaning that it is difficult to assess what has been achieved because desired achievements were not defined.

Recommendations

The finding during this IRM review allowed for a number of general recommendations to be made. These recommendations below are crosscutting, and individual recommendations are provided under each commitment reviewed in Section IV of the report.

Raising Awareness

The lack of awareness on OGP was evident during the IRM review, among civil society, business, and public institutions. The initiative is not sufficiently promoted, and therefore, many of the relevant stakeholders are not aware of the OGP process and its potential. Furthermore, co-operation and collaboration among CSOs needs to be improved to create an environment for voicing concerns and exploring the OGP initiative as an advocacy tool. Additionally, as suggested in the OGP guidelines, the government should make available in advance the information on the process of consultation. For example, developing an annual timeline for the OGP processes, which should be made publicly available at the beginning of the processes, should ensure greater participation.

Commitments Ambition

A number of measures in the action plan did not require new activities that stretched government practice beyond the OGP pre-existing reforms. While the OGP does not require new commitments, the Macedonian government should make sure that it identifies added value benefits from their inclusion in the OGP process. Furthermore, the government should avoid presenting activities that took place before entering OGP as fulfillment of certain OGP measures. In this sense, the next action plan should provide information on the state of implementation of the commitment, especially the achievements.

OGP Institutional Framework

In the following period, the government should establish a multi-stakeholder forum for continual and genuine consultations with stakeholders. This forum should enable greater consultation and participation at institution level, as well as will improve the communication efforts towards potential stakeholders. Additionally, the government should make greater efforts to ensure participation of a wider variety of stakeholders in action plan development and implementation processes, including more organisations outside the capital and those representing various minority groups.

Guarantee the Freedom of Expression, the Freedom of Media, and the Freedom of Assembly

The right to freedom of peaceful assembly is a cornerstone of a pluralistic democracy. It provides an important safeguard of freedom of expression and the right to political participation. On the other hand, freedom of media and freedom of the press provide for this necessary environment and are a pre-condition of any free, open, and transparent society. Unfortunately, these rights have been deteriorating in the last year, thus limiting the space for civil society in Macedonia. The new action plan presents an opportunity for the government to promote those rights and to ensure its full implementation.

[1] Government of Republic of Macedonia. October 2013. OGP Self-Assessment.

[2] See, Articles 19 and 20 of the universal Declaration of human rights and Article 10 of the European Convention of human rights.

[3] Article 16, paragraph 3 of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia

[4] European Commission. 2013. Annual Progress Report for Macedonia. http://bit.ly/1di2ZZH

[5] OECD/SIGMA. 2012. Assessment Report on the Republic of Macedonia.

[6] For example in 2012, only 819 or 60% from the total of 1,215 registered information holders submitted complete reports to the Commission, rendering the latter's annual report on the Law's implementation deficient. Commission for Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information. 2013. [Annual Report on the Commission's Operation in 2012]. http://bit.ly/1brs4SW [In Macedonian].

[7] Foundation Open Society – Macedonia. 2013. Overcoming the Principles of Secrecy in the Public Administration's Operation; Report from the research study on the right to public information in Macedonia. http://bit.ly/1bKXK59

[8] Article 2, paragraph 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia.

[9] Article 24, Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia.

[10] General Secretariat of the Government of Republic of Macedonia. 2007. Guidebook for Policy Creation.

[11] Ognenovska S. 2012. Public Participation in the Process of Legislative Drafting. Macedonian Center for International Cooperation. http://bit.ly/1brtysl [In Macedonian]

[12] The first strategy was adopted in 2007 and covered the period between 2007-2011. The second strategy was adopted in 2012 and covers the period between 2012-2017. http://bit.ly/1ktHveC [In Macedonian]

[13] European Commission. 2013. Annual Progress Report for Macedonia. http://bit.ly/1di2ZZH

[14] Ibid.

[15] ECtHR. 2012. Judgment available at: http://bit.ly/18PknrC. The court awarded damages to the German citizen who was "rendered" from Macedonia to Afghanistan in a case of mistaken identity. The Government of Macedonia has been asked numerous times to explain what happened to El-Masri: by the German prosecutors, Spanish prosecutors, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe inquiry, and the European Parliament inquiry. The Government, up until the trial denied any wrongdoings.

ANNEX: METHODOLOGY

As a complement to the government self-assessment, well-respected governance researchers write an independent assessment report, preferably from each OGP participating country.

These experts use a common OGP independent report questionnaire and guidelines,[1]based on a combination of interviews with local OGP stakeholders as well as desk-based analysis. This report is shared with a small International Expert Panel (appointed by the OGP Steering Committee) for peer review to ensure that the highest standards of research and due diligence have been applied.

Analysis of progress on OGP action plans is a combination of interviews, desk research, and feedback from nongovernmental stakeholder meetings. The IRM report builds on the findings of the government's own self-assessment report and any other assessments of progress put out by civil society, the private sector, or international organisations.

Each local researcher carries out stakeholder meetings to ensure an accurate portrayal of events. Given budgetary and calendar constraints, the IRM cannot consult all interested or affected parties. Consequently, the IRM strives for methodological transparency, and therefore where possible, makes public the process of stakeholder engagement in research (detailed later in this section.) In those national contexts where anonymity of informants—governmental or nongovernmental—is required, the IRM reserves the ability to protect the anonymity of informants. Additionally, because of the necessary limitations of the method, the IRM strongly encourages commentary on public drafts of each national document.

Introduction

This report is based on a mix method used during the IRM review. Based on the OGP IRM guidelines, the instruments used for the preparation of this report are interviews with responsible institutions and stakeholders, consultation forums, desk-based analysis, and a survey. In total, 21 individuals were interviewed, two stakeholders forum were held, and 54 responses were received through the survey. The survey was used for two main reasons. First, early in the planning process for the review of the country OGP action plan, IRM researcher found little awareness of the OGP in general and found limited engagement of civil society. Therefore, the survey tried to measure the level of awareness. Second, the survey allowed for greater outreach, beyond the capital.

Stakeholder Selection

Two stakeholders consultation forum were organised.

The first was targeting civil society actors, and the invitation was sent to over 1,400 active formal and non-formal organisations. This number included those participating in the consultations for the development of OGP action plan. Compensation of travel costs was ensured for participants coming from outside the capital, and while only one CSO member outside the capital confirmed participation, in the end, all participants were from Skopje. A total of nine representatives participated, coming from eight organisations, half of whom work on transparency and access to information. The forum took a form of a focus group.

The second stakeholders' consultation targeted representatives from the business sector and public institutions. While the invitation was sent to a greater number of invitees for this consultation than for the first consultation, only two participants were

present, one from the business sector and one from the international community, and the consultation took the form of a group interview. In order to cover more representatives from the business sector, follow-up attempts were made to schedule interviews with relevant companies, and an additional two business representatives were interviewed during the IRM review.

Stakeholder Meeting One
CSO stakeholders' consultation forum 24 October 2013

1. Sabina Fakic, Center for Civic Communication[2]—the centre works on transparency issues in the area of budget transparency, public spending transparency, and access to public procurement. This organisation also works on the right to access information, particularly among media and journalists.

2. Mirinda Alemdar, Nansen Dialogue Center Skopje[3]—main areas of work of the center are integrated education and promotion of peace and dialogue.

3. Sanja Bozovic, Youth Educational Forum[4]—is a leader in non-formal education of youth, promoting rights-based education, debate, and critical thinking. The forum has its monitoring and research program that largely uses free access to information.

4. Dance Danilovska, Open Society Foundation—Macedonia[5]—is the Macedonian chapter of the global network of Open Society Foundations. This organisation's fields of expertise cover transparency and accountability, access to information, public participation, and reform of the public administration.

5. Nada Naumovska, Open Society Foundation—Macedonia

6. Elizabeta Bacovska, Dutch Embassy in Skopje[6]—representative of the Dutch Embassy that provides scholarships as well as various grants to civil society organisations.

7. Sonja Zuber, Analytica[7]—one of the most prominent think tanks in the country that promotes policy alternatives in the area of EU integration, energy, and defense.

8. Aleksandra Cvetanovska, Macedonian Young Lawyers Association[8]—a professional association that provides legal aid to asylum seekers, citizens, and specifically specialised in litigation of access to information cases.

9. Zaklina Dimova, Human World[9]—an association that promotes protection, prevention, and development of fundamental values and meditation.

Synopsis

Participants discussed the process of development of the OGP action plan, the potential OGP could play in elevating concerns of civil society, and the possible ways of engagements with CSOs that would be practical and achievable and would gear greater participation from civil society. Participants then discussed specific issues and opportunities pertinent to each of the individual commitments, especially under those related to public participation and access to information.[10]

Stakeholder Meeting Two
Stakeholders' from the business sector consultations 24 October 2013

1. Gordana Gorceska, Re-Activ[11]—project manager at the Re-Aktiv company, an ICT company that has implemented some of the ICT solutions related to e-government reforms.

2. Irena Stefceva, British Embassy[12]—representative of the British Embassy, the participation was part of their diplomatic activities in preparation for the upcoming OGO Summit in London.

Synopsis

A group interview was conducted in which mostly the business sector representative participated. Specific issues and opportunities were discussed, especially on measures related to objective 2, open data, and objective 3, improvement of public services. These were discussed because of the experiences the business community had in implementing e-governance reforms in the last years.

Survey/Questionnaire Description

A questionnaire was designed to allow for additional input by stakeholders. The aim of the survey was twofold: it tried to assess the level of awareness on OGP in the country, and it tried to gather input on the implementation of the OGP commitments. It was a short survey and consisted of questions along the lines of the following four points: (1) whether respondents had heard of the OGP; (2) whether respondents knew that Macedonia had joined and was part of the OGP; (3) whether respondents had been consulted in the process of either development or implementation of the action plan; and (4) whether stakeholders wanted to submit comments on the implementation of the specific commitments. The online survey[13]was distributed to two types of respondents. First, it was sent to a CSO mailing list that reaches over 1,400 active organisations. This was done in an attempt to reach out to as many civil society actors as possible. Secondly, this survey was sent to state institutions representatives.

A total of 54 responses were received. The survey suggests a very low level of awareness about the OGP initiative and a very low level of stakeholder inclusion in the process of drafting the action plan and its implementation. Only two respondents stated that they had heard about OGP, one from civil society and one from the state administration. Only one respondent (customs) stated that they had participated in consultations, a consultation with the business sector that was organised by MISA. Additionally, several general comments were received that can be grouped into two categories: the first type of comment points out that the action plan is at a satisfactory level but shows that stakeholders are concerned with the lack of implementation and are skeptical of prospects for implementation due to lack of allocated resources for the implementation. The second type of comment relates to the lack of systematic involvement of the civil society in the process.

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[1] Full research guidance can be found at http://bit.ly/1jkisPj
[2] http://ccc.org.mk
[3] http://ndc.net.mk
[4] http://mof.org.mk
[5] http://soros.org.mk
[6] http://minbuza.nl
[7] http://analyticamk.org
[8] http://myla.org.mk
[9] http://on.fb.me/18XvP1S
[10] Minutes are available at: http://bit.ly/19C3wpY
[11] http://reaktiv.com.mk/
[12] http://bit.ly/1bdUvzT
[13] Available at http://bit.ly/19dk2iH

About the Independent Reporting Mechanism

The IRM is a key means by which government, civil society, and the private sector can track government development and implementation of OGP action plans on a bi-annual basis. The design of research and quality control of such reports is carried out by the International Experts' Panel, comprised of experts in transparency, participation, accountability, and social science research methods.

The current membership of the International Experts' Panel is:

- Yamini Aiyar
- Debbie Budlender
- Jonathan Fox
- Rosemary McGee
- Gerardo Munck

A small staff based in Washington, DC shepherds reports through the IRM process in close co-ordination with the researcher. Questions and comments about this report can be directed to the staff at irm@opengovpartnership.org