

# Uruguay Independent Reporting Mechanism: Progress Report 2012-13

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*NOTE: This is the unofficial English translation of the original Spanish-language report. As such, this document may contain inaccuracies or outdated information. Please refer to the original Spanish-language report for any citations or other official use.*



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) Progress Report 2012-13

**Thanks to the influence of civil society, the Government has recognized weaknesses in the first OGP processes in Uruguay, and improvements have been implemented. A new Plan, which takes the lessons of the first phase into account, establishes precise goals, and adopts a more strategic point of view, especially with respect to citizen participation, will be an opportunity to strengthen democracy in Uruguay.**

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a voluntary 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. The Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) carries out a biannual review of the activities of each OGP participating country.

Uruguay formalized its participation on 16 September 2011 with a letter of intent sent by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The AGESIC (Agency for Electronic Government and Information Society) is responsible for implementing the Plan. A working group comprised of the Office of Planning and Budget, the Public Information Access Unit, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the National Statistics Institute drew up the first plan. Then the Center for Archives and Access to Public Information (CAinfo) was invited to participate, representing civil society.

### OGP PROCESS

Countries participating in the OGP must follow a process for consultation with civil society to develop and implement their Plans.

Since just one representative of a single civil society organization (CSO) was invited to participate in the Plan Working Group, there was not a diversity of opinions. The first version of the Plan was published on the AGESIC website from 12-19 March 2012, and those who wished to offer recommendations could do so through the website. But the invitation to submit recommendations was not disseminated, and although 32 proposals were received, most were irrelevant to the Plan. It was announced that a report of the comments received would be drawn up, but this report was not published and neither those coordinating the consultation nor the institutions that proposed those that were included responded to the citizens that made recommendations.

This situation continued during implementation and self-assessment, and although a coalition of three CSOs asked for more representation of civil society and the government agreed, it is only recently that institutionalized forums for CSO participation have begun to be established.

### At a glance

Participant since: 2011  
Number of commitments: 18

#### Level of completion:

Completed: 7 of 18  
Substantial: 8 of 18  
Limited: 3 of 18  
Not started: 0 of 18

#### Timing

On schedule: 8 of 18

#### Commitment emphasis:

Access to information: 11 of 18  
Participation: 7 of 18  
Accountability: 5 of 18  
Technology and innovation for transparency and accountability: 12 of 18  
Unclear: 5 of 18

#### Number of commitments with:

Clear relevance to an OGP Value: 13 of 18  
Moderate or transformative potential impact: 13 of 18  
Substantial or complete implementation: 15 of 18

All three (☆): 9 of 18

## Commitment Implementation

As participants in the OGP, countries are required to make specific commitments in a two-year Action Plan. The following table summarizes each commitment, its level of completion, its potential impact, whether it was completed within the planned schedule, and next steps for future action plans. The second table summarizes the IRM researcher's assessment of progress on each commitment. Uruguay completed 7 of the 18 commitments in the plan, which covered a variety of issues and sectors, and contained a number of potentially transformative commitments. Noteworthy in the 2012 Plan is commitment No. 5 concerning a Data Platform. Not only were the expected instruments and products implemented, but a working group was consolidated, and although it still needs to be more empowered and formalized, it advanced the agenda with excellent dialogue and the participation of several governmental and outside academic units.

**Table 1: Assessment of Progress by Commitment**

COMMITMENT NAME AND SUMMARY	POTENTIAL IMPACT				LEVEL OF COMPLETION				TIMING	NEXT STEPS
	NONE	MINOR	MODERATE	TRANSFORMATIVE	NOT STARTED	LIMITED	SUBSTANTIAL	COMPLETE		
<p>★ = COMMITMENT AS WRITTEN IS CLEARLY RELEVANT TO OGP VALUES, HAS SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL IMPACT, AND WAS SUBSTANTIALLY OR COMPLETELY IMPLEMENTED.</p>										
<p>★ <b>1. Access to public information:</b> design and begin execution of a plan for dissemination and familiarization to promote and develop a culture of transparency.</p>									On schedule	New commitment based on existing implementation
<p>★ <b>2. Strengthen the culture of transparency:</b> develop content for e-learning and apply it to those who are subject to the requirements.</p>									Behind schedule	Continued work on basic implementation
<p><b>3. National Transparency Prize:</b> recognize public institutions that distinguish themselves as models because of their work for transparency.</p>									On schedule	New commitment
<p><b>4. E-Participation:</b> establish a model of participation and create an electronic platform for it.</p>									Behind schedule	Revision of the commitment to make it more achievable or measurable
<p>★ <b>5. Open government data:</b> have the catalogue of official data, an open data community, and manuals for civil society, developers and citizens in general.</p>									Behind schedule	Continued work
<p><b>6. Digital literacy plan:</b> establish the Plan, reaching 100,000 adults by 2015.</p>									Behind schedule	Continued work
<p>★ <b>7. Government purchasing and contracting agency:</b> set up this agency.</p>									On schedule	New commitment
<p><b>8. Government Resource Planning (GRP):</b> at each Ministry, have a solution for support of administrative management in one of its executive units, using the Electronic Government Platform to exchange information between systems.</p>									On schedule	New commitment
<p><b>9. Electronic file system:</b> implement in at least 5 government institutions.</p>									On schedule	New commitment

COMMITMENT NAME AND SUMMARY	POTENTIAL IMPACT				LEVEL OF COMPLETION				TIMING	NEXT STEPS
	NONE	MINOR	MODERATE	TRANSFORMATIVE	NOT STARTED	LIMITED	SUBSTANTIAL	COMPLETE		
<p>★ = COMMITMENT AS WRITTEN IS CLEARLY RELEVANT TO OGP VALUES, HAS SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL IMPACT, AND WAS SUBSTANTIALLY OR COMPLETELY IMPLEMENTED.</p>										
<p><b>10. Uruguay Concursa:</b> implement the “In-person channel” for registrations, and install the hiring process at the central administration, allowing follow-up and shortening timeframes.</p>									On schedule	New commitment
<p>★ <b>11. National public software:</b> set up the Portal and make the first application public in accordance with established policies.</p>									On schedule	New commitment
<p>★ <b>12. Online processes and services:</b> identify the processes of greatest interest to citizens and design models to simplify them.</p>									Behind schedule	Continued work
<p>★ <b>13. Citizen E-Funds:</b> implement the three best proposals for services citizens want online.</p>									Behind schedule	Continued work
<p><b>14. Single electronic windows:</b> simplify, standardize, and integrate citizen services.</p>									Behind schedule	Revision of the commitment
<p>★ <b>15. Uruguayan Government Portal:</b> conduct dissemination campaigns, continue increasing the amount of information available, and include participation tools in the Portal</p>									Behind schedule	Continued work
<p><b>16. Passport processing system at consular offices:</b> cover 50% of consular network.</p>									Behind schedule	None: <b>Abandon the commitment</b>
<p><b>17. Apostille Convention:</b> approve the Convention in Uruguay to simplify the international exchange of documents.</p>									On schedule	Abandon the commitment
<p>★ <b>18. Electronic tax supporting documentation:</b> approve a new system for electronic documentation of operations.</p>									Behind schedule	Continued work

Table 2: Summary of results of the Commitments

COMMITMENT NAME	SUMMARY OF RESULTS
<p>★ = COMMITMENT AS WRITTEN IS CLEARLY RELEVANT TO OGP VALUES, HAS SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL IMPACT, AND WAS SUBSTANTIALLY OR COMPLETELY IMPLEMENTED.</p>	
<p>★ <b>1. Access to public information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance to OGP values: clear</li> <li>• Potential impact: moderate</li> <li>• Progress: completed</li> </ul>	<p>Uruguay developed informative brochures for distribution to public institutions and citizens, conducted a campaign called “The law in your own language,” and facilitated use of the information request portal ‘quesabes.org’. Although progress was made in terms of public officials’ knowledge of the law, the result for citizens is as yet unknown. Wider knowledge of the law will make it possible to consolidate a new paradigm that considers public information a citizen’s asset. The institutions’ principal challenge is to rethink the information from a citizen approach, publicizing information of special interest to the population in accessible, reusable formats.</p>
<p>★ <b>2. Strengthen the culture of transparency</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance to OGP values: clear</li> <li>• Potential impact: moderate</li> <li>• Progress: substantial</li> </ul>	<p>As of November 2013 there were 152 transparency points of contact designated by those who are subject to the requirement, considered a high number even though it is not 100% of the institutions legally subject to the requirement. It is considered relevant so future actions should focus on active transparency, addressing the institutional weakness of some public institutions that do not have internal accountability mechanisms, familiarizing the institutions’ executives and using indicators to monitor performance vis-à-vis publishing information.</p>

<p>3. National Transparency Prize</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance to OGP values: clear</li> <li>• Potential impact: minor</li> <li>• Progress: complete</li> </ul>	<p>In March 2012, the UAIP [Public Information Access Unit] called upon the public institutions to participate in the first awarding of the Transparency Prize, thus completing this commitment. Some 14 projects from 10 institutions competed in three categories: Active Transparency, Passive Transparency, and Culture of Transparency. This can be considered a useful tool for this first phase of promoting a culture of transparency in the public sector. The IRM research team recommends that goals be established to increase the number of participating public institutions and projects. Moreover, although there are legal restrictions because of the authorities that the law grants the UAIP, it is recommended that a plan to expand the Transparency Prize to institutions outside the public sector be drawn up.</p>
<p>4. E-Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance to OGP values: clear</li> <li>• Potential impact: minor</li> <li>• Progress: limited</li> </ul>	<p>Limited progress was made toward a model of participation, and the government opted to replace creation of a Participation Platform and prioritize e-participation initiatives that may be less broad, but connected to citizens' daily life. All in all, the implemented actions had minor impact in terms of mobilizing citizens to participate in the public debate and contribute to the development of new forms of governance. A comprehensive law or other more concrete actions are recommended.</p>
<p>★ 5. Open government data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance to OGP values: clear</li> <li>• Potential impact: transformative</li> <li>• Progress: substantial</li> </ul>	<p>In 2012 the government created <a href="http://datos.gub.uy">datos.gub.uy</a>, which currently contains information on 18 government institutions and permits access to various kinds of information. As of December 2012, the National Catalogue of Open Data is available. It includes 15 institutions and makes it possible to access government websites and resources that offer public information from a single point. Also, the first open data competition was held (<a href="http://dateidea.uy">dateidea.uy</a>) in order to identify open government data and disseminate all the ways it can be used. This progress has great transformative potential for the future, so the Portal and participation should continue to be expanded and developed.</p>
<p>6. Digital literacy plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance to OGP values: clear</li> <li>• Potential impact: transformative</li> <li>• Progress: limited</li> </ul>	<p>Progress towards the goal of literacy for 100,000 adults by 2015 can be considered well underway, but progress since 2007 (recent progress) is considered slow. Moreover, measuring the quality of the training delivered and its effect on the participating groups is difficult. This commitment is highly relevant given the country's demographics and recent policies on access to information and participation, which depend on citizens having a certain level of computer knowledge. Consequently, in addition to the actions carried out by MEC (Ministry of Education and Culture) Centers, strategies to strengthen and monitor the impact of related initiatives should be developed. Another priority is to strengthen stakeholder networks related to this issue in civil society and the private sector.</p>
<p>★ 7. Government purchasing and contracting agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance to OGP values: clear</li> <li>• Potential impact: moderate</li> <li>• Progress: complete</li> </ul>	<p>The Government Purchasing and Contracting Agency (ACCE) was established by the 2008 Accountability Law, but implemented in late 2011, completing this commitment with several actions for institutional strengthening and related initiatives, such as the Unique Register of Government Suppliers (Registro Único de Proveedores del Estado; RUPE). The RUPE makes information about government purchasing available for various forms of social auditing. Continuation of the RUPE, a Government Purchasing Observatory, and other new contracting modalities are recommended.</p>
<p>8. Government resource planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance to OGP values: not clear</li> <li>• Potential impact: moderate</li> <li>• Progress: substantial</li> </ul>	<p>This is a planning, information and management system that introduces efficiency in the use of an institution's financial resources. A team of specialists from several governmental agencies worked between May and November 2012 on a Master Plan for a GRP system for the entire administration. It is not clear how this system can improve transparency for citizens, so it is recommended that the GRP be developed on the basis of a concept of citizen relations that would furnish citizens with information in real time concerning budget aspects of the administration.</p>
<p>9. Electronic file system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance to OGP values: not clear</li> <li>• Potential impact: moderate</li> <li>• Progress: complete</li> </ul>	<p>The commitment was completed when it was implemented in five government institutions and its implementation was initiated in two more. Although not explicitly stated in the commitment as written, the benefits include the fact that the electronic file increases the transparency of the government's actions and increases access to information. However, in order to achieve these objectives, the electronic file must have traceability (query by citizens) functions 100% coverage.</p>
<p>10. Uruguay Concursa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance to OGP values: clear</li> <li>• Potential impact: minor</li> <li>• Progress: complete</li> </ul>	<p>The system makes it possible to manage the selection of applications for the civil service, including, most relevantly, query of the status of applications by the candidates in any phase of the process. The system provides greater transparency to the extent that it permits query by the applicant and the participating institutions throughout the hiring process. There are no new proposals for the system due to the</p>

	prohibition on hiring officials because of the 2014 national elections.
<p>★ 11. National public software</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance to OGP values: clear</li> <li>• Potential impact: moderate</li> <li>• Progress: complete</li> </ul>	This Portal was set up in December 2012. Among other things, it contains a definition of public software, the purpose of the project, instructions on the procedure for publishing and using the software, the catalogue, and access to documents and forms that are useful for including a new application in said catalogue. In addition to the necessary technical next steps, there is a need to involve civil society in order to enrich the exchange with its knowledge and clarify the software's relationship to OGP values.
<p>★ 12. Online processes and services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance to OGP values: clear</li> <li>• Potential impact: transformative</li> <li>• Progress: substantial</li> </ul>	In 2012 the most important processes were identified by means of a survey and the development of a prioritization matrix. Then a simplification model was developed based on four components: prioritization, standardization, change management, and communication with the public. A pilot experiment is being developed at the Ministry of Public Health and, in July 2013, the President of Uruguay approved Decree No. 177/013 on simplification and modernization of administrative processes. The IRM researchers recommend compliance with the principles established in the decree for simplification of processes, especially relating to publishing offered processes online.
<p>★ 13. Citizen E-Funds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance to OGP values: clear</li> <li>• Potential impact: moderate</li> <li>• Progress: substantial</li> </ul>	The fourth iteration of the Electronic Government E-funds appeared in 2012, for the first time asking citizens for proposals for putting processes and services on line. Approximately 50 proposals were received through the AGESIC portal. Five proposals were selected, given the interest they generated in the evaluation committee. It is recommended that participation in the selection processes be moved forward, the co-participation of OSC be promoted, and the funds be evaluated from the standpoint of services to citizens.
<p>14. Single electronic windows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance to OGP values: not clear</li> <li>• Potential impact: moderate</li> <li>• Progress: limited</li> </ul>	This commitment was very difficult to evaluate because it includes a set of varied initiatives in different stages of completion. The notion of a "single window" entails the idea of tying processes to a single location or allowing them to be resolved in a single forum. There were different levels of progress at each window, from zero in the case of public safety to full compliance for the single "company" window. But how the windows can strengthen open government values needs to be made clear.
<p>★ 15. Uruguayan Government Portal</p> <p>Relevance to OGP values: clear</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential impact: moderate</li> <li>• Progress: substantial</li> </ul>	At the start of the Plan implementation period, the Portal had some 56 pages with the first mobile version of the portal and a survey-based participation mechanism. Improvements were implemented to fulfil AGESIC's minimum requirements and work was carried out on the production of specific approaches on the Personal Data Protection and Open Data home page. In addition, the number of accessible pages increased and they were improved, and dissemination campaigns were conducted. The site is very easy to use and the users' assessment is very positive, making this commitment highly relevant. Continuation of the specified actions is recommended.
<p>16. System for processing ordinary passports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance to OGP values: not clear</li> <li>• Potential impact: minor</li> <li>• Progress: substantial</li> </ul>	Up until 2012, applying for passports abroad required manually sending fingerprints. Beginning in that year, a software application that facilitates the sending of documentation electronically without the need to send it by diplomatic pouch was coordinated at 14 consulates. While relevant and successful, the commitment cannot be considered a substantial change or clearly related to OGP values. Given that, it is suggested that the commitment not be included in the subsequent plans.
<p>17. Apostille Convention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance to OGP values: not clear</li> <li>• Potential impact: minor</li> <li>• Progress: complete</li> </ul>	The Apostille system has been fully operational since October 2012, and thus this goal has been achieved. The initiative enables Uruguayans residing abroad to save time and money when validating their processes in their countries of residence, and also benefits foreign nationals who need to conduct processes in Uruguay. All in all, since this is not a contribution that is clearly relevant to open government values, it is suggested that the commitment not be included in the subsequent plans.
<p>★ 18. Electronic tax supporting documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance to OGP values: clear</li> <li>• Potential impact: transformative</li> <li>• Progress: substantial</li> </ul>	In November 2011, the DGI launched the CFE ( <a href="http://www.efactura.dgi.gub.uy">www.efactura.dgi.gub.uy</a> ). In October 2013, the system was in operation at 40 companies that issued more than 80,000,000 electronic documents, and more than 300 companies are in the process of certification and testing. The CFE improves the quantity, quality, and timeliness of the information received by the tax authority, which makes it possible to perfect control of taxpayer compliance. The system also makes better control of tax evasion possible, thus reducing the levels of informal status, which helps create a framework of fair competition that is transparent to taxpayers. Directing new efforts toward including small and medium-sized companies is recommended.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

In recent years, Uruguay has taken important steps toward strengthening access to public information, transparency, and accountability, even though all sectors recognize the need to safeguard the achievements that have been made and continue moving forward.

### Stakeholder priorities

For the next plan, the participants who were interviewed give priority to actions involving:

- “Transparency and accountability,” specifically actions concerning compliance with, implementation of, and adjustments to Law 18,381 on the right to access information.
- “Access to Public Information,” particularly moving forward with establishing standards for open data and empowering the working group that was established for this issue.
- “Citizen service and response to requests.”
- “Participation,” especially approval of a legal framework that affords guarantees and promotes mechanisms for participation and monitoring of public management.

### Recommendations

Based on the information gathered during this evaluation, several actions are recommended. ‘Section VI: ¿Cómo Avanzar?’ of this report presents those recommendations in detail.

#### 1. Formulation of the OGP plan

- a. Establish more precise, measurable, verifiable goals.
- b. Ensure that the balance of commitments covers the OGP values.
- c. Adopt a more strategic point of view for the second plan.
- d. Ensure balance between the originating institutions and those that are responsible for the commitments included in the plan.

#### 2. Mechanisms for participation, consultation, and monitoring of the plan

- a. Use media to inform citizens about open government and the opportunities for participation.
- b. Work on a plan dissemination strategy aimed at the various stakeholders.
- c. Create thematic positions for the inclusion of civil society on the working team.
- d. Maintain forums for monitoring and follow-up of actions and achievement of goals.
- e. Create a broad platform of institutions associated with the issue of open government.

#### 3. Plan contents

- a. Access to Public Information: include specific goals to improve the implementation of Law 18,381 in aspects like: compliance; strictly observing time periods and procedures; controlling the classification of information; disseminating and consolidating the UAIP’s competencies to receive reports and complaints from citizens and, in general, establishing mechanisms for consultation, advisory assistance, and legal assistance so that people can exercise their rights.
- b. Participation: include ambitious goals that promote more participative governance. In this respect, it is necessary to have a legal framework that affords guarantees to citizens and to include the citizen perspective when formulating and implementing commitments, as in the case of the GRP or the electronic file.
- c. Transparency and Open Data: strengthen the work being done by the Open Data Group, in which an excellent dialogue and participation have been achieved.

**Eligibility requirements 2012:** To participate in OGP, governments must demonstrate commitment to the idea of open government by meeting minimum criteria on key dimensions. Objective indicators are used to determine country progress on each of the dimensions. For more information, visit <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/eligibility>. The OGP figures are listed in parentheses.

**Budget transparency:** Uruguay not included (not applicable)

**Access to information:** Law approved (4 out of 4)

**Asset disclosure:** Elected officials disclose to parliament (2 out of 4)

**Participation:** 10 out of 10 (4 out of 4)

ICD’s mission is to produce knowledge and generate actions that contribute to greater participation in democratic life, in the processes of national development, and in regional integration. Its primary objective is to promote democratic, inclusive, and equitable development, for which it aims to strengthen civil society and promote the active participation of all sectors.

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



## I. BACKGROUND

### Introduction

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 democratic governance. OGP provides an international forum for dialogue and the sharing of innovations among governments, civil society and private sector entities, all of which are committed to achieving open government.

Uruguay is one of the 39 Cohort 2 countries that joined the Open Government Partnership in April 2011. It formalized its participation on 16 September 2011 in a declaration issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

To participate in OGP, governments must demonstrate a commitment to open government, reflected in a set of essential indicators: 1) tax transparency; 2) public disclosure of the income and assets of persons holding political posts and senior government officials; 3) access to public information; and 4) public participation in monitoring government accounts. Objective indicators created by entities outside OGP are used as a baseline for determining the level of each country's progress in each of these aspects, with maximum of 4 points assigned to each indicator.

Uruguay met the eligibility requirements and had a total score of 10 points out of 12 possible. When it joined the OGP, Uruguay was not included in the tax transparency survey of the International Budget Partnership. Therefore, this criterion was not considered a factor in its eligibility, and the total possible points were reduced from 16 to 12.<sup>1</sup> Uruguay scored 2 with respect to the public disclosure of income and assets of holding political posts and senior government officials since the obligation is limited to elected politicians declaring their interests to Congress;<sup>2</sup> it scored 4 in access to information because it has a law on access to information;<sup>3</sup> and it received the highest possible score (10 out of 10) in the "Civil Liberties" sub-indicator of the Democracy Index, which rated it 4 for this indicator.<sup>4</sup>

All participating governments must prepare action plans that include specific commitments to be fulfilled within an initial two-year period. Governments must structure their action plans around the "grand challenges."<sup>5</sup> (See Section 4 for a list of the grand challenges). Action plans must include significant commitments to change practices based on the relevant grand challenge. These commitments may be based on existing work, identify new steps for completing reforms in progress or initiate action in a new area.

On 22 November 2011, by Presidential Resolution, Uruguay resolved to create a working group to prepare the Action Plan that was submitted by authorities of the National Government in Brasilia on 17 and 18 April 2012 during the First Global Meeting of the OGP. This Plan was in effect from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013. In early October 2013, the Agency for Electronic Government and Information Society (Agencia para el Desarrollo del Gobierno de Gestión Electrónica y la Sociedad de la Información y del Conocimiento; AGESIC) published its self-assessment of the Plan. According to official OGP timelines,<sup>6</sup> officers and members of civil society will review the first Plan or develop a new Plan by April 2014, with consultations beginning in January 2014.

At the time that this independent report was written, Uruguay had fulfilled some the commitments included in its first Action Plan in their entirety, and was in the process of fulfilling or revising others. Meanwhile, it is in the process of drafting a second Action Plan, which will take effect in 2014.



According to the provisions of the OGP Articles of Governance, the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) researcher has partnered with local, independent researchers experienced in the matter to evaluate the development and implementation of action plans in each country. In Uruguay, the IRM researcher was the Communication and Development Institute (Instituto de Comunicación y Desarrollo; ICD). It is the aim of the IRM to establish ongoing dialogue on the development and implementation of future commitments in each OGP participating country.

### Institutional Context

AGESIC<sup>7</sup> is responsible for implementing the Action Plan. A working group, comprised of the Office of Planning and Budget, the Public Information Access Unit, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the National Statistics Institute drew up the first plan. Subsequently, the Center for Archives and Access to Public Information (CAinfo) was invited to participate, representing civil society.

### Methodological Note

The IRM collaborated with experienced, independent Uruguayan researchers to develop and distribute assessment reports for each OGP participating government. In the case of Uruguay, the Communication and Development Institute, which was responsible for preparing this report, was selected. The report was also reviewed by the OGP working group and by OGP staff and the OGP International Panel of Experts.

To gather opinions from the various direct stakeholders, ICD interviewed government staff responsible for the plan and those responsible for the commitments. The ICD also consulted with various representatives from civil society, academia and international bodies using different tools, such as an online survey, a focus group, and online and in-person interviews. The annex on methodology in this report describes all activities in detail. In addition, ICD reviewed official documents, everything published on the official website, the Action Plan,<sup>8</sup> and the related Self-Assessment Report<sup>9</sup> (these documents will be mentioned repeatedly in this report).

All of the original documents produced during research, as well as many of those mentioned in this report, can be seen and commented on in the Online IRM Library in Uruguay, at <http://bit.ly/1jeEwWU>

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<sup>1</sup> The OGP gives two points to each of the two essential pieces of information (“Propuesta de Presupuesto del Ejecutivo” and “Informe de Auditoría”), deemed part of a sub-set of indicators from the 2012 Open Budget Index for countries included in the Index. See International Budget Partnership, “Encuesta de Presupuesto Abierto 2010,” June 2011, <http://bit.ly/1jP88ir>

<sup>2</sup> 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>

<sup>3</sup> The law is available at: <http://bit.ly/18gd6yp>

<sup>4</sup> Economist Intelligence Unit, “Democracy Index 2010: Democracy in Retreat” (London: Economist, 2010). Available at: <http://bit.ly/eLC1rE>

<sup>5</sup> The OGP Grand Challenges are improving public services, increasing public integrity, more effectively managing public resources, creating safer communities and increasing corporate accountability.

<sup>6</sup> A copy of the OGP timeline is available at: <http://bit.ly/1dAjCAm>

<sup>7</sup> AGESIC is an agency operating under the Uruguayan Presidency (executing entity). It has technical autonomy and can coordinate with other government bodies. Its purpose is to improve public service, using the opportunities provided by information and communication technologies.

<sup>8</sup> Information about the Plan can be found at: <http://bit.ly/1ksY6RO>

<sup>9</sup> Government of Uruguay, *Reporte de auto evaluación*, September 2013, <http://bit.ly/19wZHxZ>

## II. PROCESS: DEVELOPMENT OF ACTION PLAN

OGP participating countries must consult the public widely when preparing their action plans, according to the following criteria or requirements:

1. *Make the details of their public consultation process and timeline available (online at minimum) prior to the consultation.*
2. *Consult widely with the national community, including civil society and the private sector.*
3. *Seek out a diverse range of views.*
4. *Make a summary of the public consultation and all individual written comment submissions available online.*
5. *Undertake OGP awareness raising activities to enhance participation in the consultation.*
6. *Give the public advance notice of consultations.*
7. *Use a variety of mechanisms—including online and in-person meetings—to ensure the accessibilities of opportunities for citizens to engage.*

An additional requirement, during consultation, is set out in the OGP Articles of Governance. This requirement is dealt with in section III “Consultation during implementation,” but is included here for ease of reference:

1. *Countries are to identify a viable forum to enable regular multistakeholder consultation on OGP implementation—this can be an existing entity or a new one.*

**Table 1: Action Plan Consultation Process**

<b>Phase of Action Plan</b>	<b>OGP Process Requirement (Articles of Governance Section)</b>	<b>Did the government meet this requirement?</b>
During Development of the Plan	Process timeline: Available prior to consultations	No
	Timeline: Online	N/A
	Timeline: Other channels	N/A
	Advance notice	No
	Advance notice: Days	N/A
	Advance notice: Adequacy	N/A
	Awareness-raising activities	No
	Online consultations	Yes
	Online consultations: Links	<a href="http://bit.ly/wt3cm4">http://bit.ly/wt3cm4</a>
	In-person consultations	No <sup>1</sup>
Summary of comments	No	
During Implementation	Regular forum	No

### Advance Notice of Consultation

The Action Open Government Plan 2012 of Uruguay was developed by a working group appointed by the Presidency and composed of government bodies, a group to which the

CSO CAinfo was invited. The time frames for preparing the Plan were then quite pressing, and this first Plan was developed on an accelerated basis. The Uruguayan government states that it has carried out activities to disseminate the Plan, but we have not found relevant websites where the public consultation was announced.

The results of an IRM survey conducted of members of civil society from the academic sector, international organizations, the media and local and national government agencies give an interesting indication of people's knowledge of the Action Plan and consultation carried out in preparing it.<sup>2</sup> The results show that there was no advance dissemination of the Plan and that there was very limited consultation in preparing it. Among those who responded (approximately 100 responses), only 27% were aware of the Plan (73% were unaware of it). Moreover, 90% of those responding did not know whether civil society was consulted in any way in preparing the Plan.

#### Quality and Breadth of Consultation

The Action Plan was prepared by a working group within the Government, and only one representative from one CSO was invited to participate. There was no participation by or consultations with the private sector or international organizations. Therefore, there was no diversity of opinion within the working group, which only included central government bodies.

CAinfo, the CSO that participated in the group, proposed creating ample opportunities to participate in the group that would not be restricted to a single organization.<sup>3</sup> CAinfo, in turn, brought a document to the table with a large number of proposals on three central themes:

- Questions of form concerning the process of participating in the Open Government initiative;
- Proposals for incorporating Open Government principles;
- Proposals for citizen participation.<sup>4</sup>

None of the different proposals presented by CAinfo were taken into consideration or included in the Plan.<sup>5</sup> The first version of the Plan was posted on the AGESIC website between 12 and 19 March 2012,<sup>6</sup> allowing the possibility of sending recommendations and suggestions for the Plan by web TV. But the invitation to submit recommendations was not announced through any medium of communication or otherwise, except on the AGESIC website.<sup>7</sup> Thirty-two proposals were received, but most were irrelevant to the Action Plan. The final version of the Plan was presented at the OGP meeting in Brasilia in April 2012. The announcement was made that a report of comments received would be drawn up, but this report was never published, and neither those coordinating the consultation nor the institutions that proposed those that were included responded to the citizens that made recommendations.

The aforementioned survey, conducted within the framework of the IRM, reveals that the quality and depth of participation in preparing the Action Plan was very limited. Only 4% of those who responded participated in any way in preparing the Plan, while 94% did not participate. Those who participated stated that they had responded at meetings discussing the theme (3 responses) or had made comments online or in proposals (1 response each, respectively).

Government sources consulted for this report agree in saying that they had very little time for full consultation, as would have been appropriate. They say that, since most of the commitments were taken from plans or agendas that predated the Open Government Plan, they had already been validated or endorsed by different means.

This situation, from an agenda based on selecting actions previously designed in other plans, has two effects to be considered. The first effect is that it tends to reinforce

initiatives more in line with electronic government approaches or public access to information since these predate the Open Government approach. The second is that it tends to ignore the importance of the components of transparent management and citizen engagement in access and public decisions, which tend to be the most original components incorporating the idea of open government in earlier approaches.

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<sup>1</sup> A single organization was invited to participate in the Action Plan Working Group.

<sup>2</sup> Online survey on Uruguay's Open Government Action Plan, ICD, 2013. A PDF is available at <http://bit.ly/18JhCT>

<sup>3</sup> Opinions given by members of CAinfo at the focus group conducted at ICD on 17 October 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Taken from the proposals for the Action Plan of the Center for Archives and Access to Public Information (CAinfo).

<sup>5</sup> Opinions given by CAinfo members at the focus group conducted at ICD on 17 October 2013.

<sup>6</sup> AGESIC, 19 March 2012. Posted and published at [www.agesic.gub.uy](http://www.agesic.gub.uy)

<sup>7</sup> Although AGESIC representatives indicate that it was disseminated in other media, it was only possible to identify the March 2012 consultation on the AGESIC website. Online public consultation <http://bit.ly/1eZT5h7>



### III. PROCESS: CONSULTATION DURING IMPLEMENTATION

As part of their participation in OGP, governments commit to identifying a forum to enable regular multistakeholder consultation on OGP implementation—this forum can be an existing entity or a new one. This section summarizes that information.

#### Consultation Process

After preparing the Action Plan, the Government of Uruguay formalized it in the Executive Order of August 2012,<sup>1</sup> charging AGESIC with monitoring, evaluating and progressing the Plan. This order did not establish a forum or permanent mechanisms for multisectorial consultation in monitoring Plan implementation. Nor did the working group continue working on an ongoing basis or assuming roles for monitoring, supporting or overseeing Plan actions. In fact, during the current process to prepare Plan 2014-2015, the working group itself considered presenting a project as a way of continuing to work together and keeping the opportunity open,<sup>2</sup> which materialized as a project promoting open government.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, it is important to note that for some commitments, specific consultations were held with experts and points of contact involved in the matter, as in the case of the round of interviews conducted in adjusting the e-participation project.<sup>4</sup>

In light of this situation, in February 2013, a coalition of three CSOs asked to meet with the Director of AGESIC and Open Government contact<sup>5</sup> and asked that civil society be included in consultation mechanisms on implementing the Open Government Plan. On 12 June 2013, AGESIC made a decision setting up a working group for this purpose.<sup>6</sup> This working group consisted of representatives from the following institutions: AGESIC, Office of Planning and Budget (OPP), Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRREE), National Statistics Institutes (INE), the Public Information Access Unit (UAIP), the Political Science Institute of the College of Social Sciences of Universidad de la República, UNESCO (as international body monitoring the process of approving and developing Open Government Plan 2013-2014), and two civil society representatives. Despite repeated requests to expand civil society's participation, the mechanism used to prepare the first plan was reused, with CAinfo being directly appointed again, although the another CSO was also appointed: the National NGO Association (Asociación Nacional de ONG; ANONG). This outcome sparked criticism from civil society, which took action to change the procedure (joint letters, meetings and an event with representatives of the OGP Steering Committee).<sup>7</sup>

The complaint resulted in AGESIC authorities changing the decision and, following the aforementioned advocacy actions, the government revised the mechanism for civil society appointments and participation, creating two non-nominative spaces for civil society, with the possibility of the SCOs appointing their own representative.<sup>8</sup> A network of organizations interested in issues of open government was set up to conduct this appointment process.

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<sup>1</sup> Executive Branch, Uruguay, Decree No. 259/012. Approval of the Uruguay Open Government Plan ([http://archivo.presidencia.gub.uy/sci/decretos/2012/08/mef\\_716.pdf](http://archivo.presidencia.gub.uy/sci/decretos/2012/08/mef_716.pdf)).

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Victoria Koster, member of the Digital Citizens' Area, conducted on 25 September 2013.

<sup>3</sup> The Working Group presented the project titled "Gobierno abierto, un asunto de todos y de todas" <http://bit.ly/MK2dNY>

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Juan Bertón, sociologist and head of the Proyecto E-Participación, conducted on 10 October 2013.

<sup>5</sup> The organizations are: Center for Archives and Access to Public Information (Centro de Archivos y Acceso a la Información Pública; CAinfo), Open Data, Transparency and Access to Information (Datos Abiertos, Transparencia y Acceso a la información; DATA) and the Communication and Development Institute (Instituto de Comunicación y Desarrollo; ICD).

<sup>6</sup> Resolution No. 022/013 - Minutes No. 014 / 2013, <http://bit.ly/1dUKBUR>

<sup>6</sup> Information presented at the meeting with civil society organizations held by ICD within the framework of this research, 17 October 2013.

<sup>8</sup> Information taken from the “Informe de Autoevaluación,” September 2013.

## IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMITMENTS

OGP participating countries develop biannual action plans. Governments must begin their plans by explaining their current efforts related to their chosen OGP grand challenges, including specific open government strategies and ongoing programs. 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 ongoing reforms or initiate action in any entirely new area.

OGP commitments are to be structured around a set of five “grand challenges” that all governments face. OGP recognizes that all countries are starting from different baselines. Therefore, countries are charged with selecting the grand challenges and concrete commitments most relevant to their country contexts. No action plan, standard or specific commitment is 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 public health, justice, water, electricity, telecommunications and any other relevant service 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 national security sector, response to disasters, crises 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 in 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**— These commitments:
  - pertain to government-held information;
  - are not restricted to data but pertain to all information;
  - may cover proactive or reactive releases of information;
  - may pertain to strengthening the right to information; and
  - must provide open access to information (it should not be privileged or internal only to government).
- **Citizen Participation** — governments seek to mobilize citizens to engage in public debate and make contributions that lead to more responsive, innovative and effective governance. Commitments around citizen participation:
  - 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;
  - often include elements of access to information to ensure meaningful input of interested members of the public into decisions;

- often include the citizen's right to be heard, but do not necessarily include the right to be heeded.
- **Accountability** — rules, regulations, and mechanisms in place that call upon government actors to justify their actions, act upon criticisms made of them, and accept responsibility for failure to perform with respect to laws or commitments.
  - As part of open government, such commitments have an "open" element, meaning that they are not purely internal or closed systems of accountability without a public face.
- **Technology and Innovation** — These commitments:
  - Promote new technologies that offer opportunities for information sharing, public participation, and collaboration;
  - Should make more information public in ways that enable people to both understand what their governments do and to influence decisions;
  - May commit to supporting the ability of governments and citizens to use technology for openness and accountability; and
  - May likewise support the use of technology by government employees and citizens alike.

Countries may focus their commitments at the national, local or subnational — wherever they believe their 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 Uruguay included in its Action Plan 2012. The Plan includes a total of 18 clustered commitments in three thematic areas: Increasing public integrity; More effectively managing public resources; and Improving public services.

While most indicators are clear and objective in terms of methodology, a number 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 open government.
  - *Grand challenges:* While some commitments may be relevant to more than one grand challenge, the researcher only evaluated those that had been identified by government (as almost all commitments address a single grand challenge).
- **Ambition:**
  - *Potential impact:* OGP participating 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 a commitment might be in the policy area. This is based on researcher's findings and experience as a public policy expert.

Unofficial English Translation. Please cite the official Spanish version.

- *New or pre-existing*: The IRM researcher also recorded, in a non-judgmental fashion, whether a commitment was new or 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 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 implementation period assessed.



## 1. Access to Public Information

### Commitment Text

The Public Information Access Unit (UAIP) proposes developing a national dissemination and familiarization campaign to promote the creation, institutionalization and deepening of a culture of transparency in the country. The organizations involved are the Public Information Access Unit and AGESIC. Goals for 2012 are to: design and begin execution of a plan for dissemination and familiarization. In addition, to improve the UAIP and Transparency portal ([transparency.gub.uy](http://transparency.gub.uy)) to facilitate citizen access and participation.

Commitment Description						
Answerability	Lead institution	UAIP (Public Information Access Unit) and AGESIC (Agency for Electronic Government and Information Society)				
	Supporting institutions	None specified				
	Point of contact specified?	No				
Specificity and Measurability		Moderate: Commitment language describes objectively verifiable activity, but does not specify milestones or products.				
Relevance	OGP Grand Challenges	Increasing public integrity, Creating safer communities, Increasing corporate accountability				
	Relevant OGP Values	Transparency	Citizen Participation	Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency and Accountability	None
		✓	✓		✓	
Ambition						
New or pre-existing?		Potential Impact				
New		Moderate: the commitment is a major step forward in the relevant public policy area, but remains limited in scale or scope				
Level of completion						
Start Date:	End Date:	Actual completion			Complete	
Unspecified	2012	Projected completion			Complete	
Next steps						
New commitment based on existing implementation						

### What happened?

Before the Action Plan was approved, an Access to Public Information Law<sup>1</sup> existed which, although entailing substantial progress in the formal recognition of rights, was unknown by most citizens and a good many government employees.

UAIP's principal actions in 2012 focused on disseminating and raising awareness of the Law, primarily for public institutions and their employees, to enhance their ability to properly organize and classify information and be better able to respond to citizens' requests for information. According to the information gathered, the UAIP opted for an explicit strategy of giving priority to "regulated parties" according to the Access to Public Information Law instead of implementing actions to raise awareness aimed at citizens regarding their right to access public information.

Despite the Government's bias in the actions taken during the study period, three specific initiatives worth mentioning have been identified that are focused on raising citizen awareness:

1. Preparation of informational brochures to be distributed to citizens and public institutions. The slogan of the campaign aimed at citizens was "Acceso a la información pública. Tu derecho" [Access to public information. Your right.]. The brochures for government employees spoke to their dual role as citizens and public servants.<sup>2</sup>
2. In March 2012, as part of the publicity campaign titled "La ley en tu propio lenguaje" [The law in your own language] of the National Printing and Official Publication Department (Dirección Nacional de Impresiones and Publicaciones Oficiales; IMPO), explained the scope of Law 18,381 in an easy-to-understand manner. The campaign was conducted over television, radio and also in urban actions in public spaces.<sup>3</sup>
3. At the end of 2012, the UAIP recommended removing the obstacles put up by some government bodies by providing information requested by citizens through the portal "¿Qué sabes?" (quesabes.org).<sup>4</sup> This portal, a civil society initiative, seeks to make it easier to request information from any Uruguayan public institution subject to Law 18,381.<sup>5</sup> In light of the obstacles raised by some bodies that were requiring the requesting party to attend in person, a UAIP resolution established that, "at the request of organization responsible for the portal," government bodies would be obligated to respond to requests for information from anyone by Internet and/or e-mail without being able to require the use of specific forms for requesting information.<sup>6</sup>

Based on the above actions, this commitment is considered substantially completed.

### **Relevance**

Actions taken within the framework of this commitment have achieved disparate degrees of progress among the different audiences. On one hand, government employees and specialized government offices have become knowledgeable about the Law and how it is compulsory to adopt a responsible and sensitive attitude towards citizen requests. On the other hand, one notes that citizens are still not aware of the Law, and the rights consecrated in it have still not been assimilated as essential components of the relationship between citizens and the State.

By citizens gaining a better understanding of the Law, it will become possible to build a new paradigm that considers public information to be a citizen's right and asset instead of an element of the administration's authority. In addition, the unrestricted exercise of this right will allow citizens to have more and better tools for control and participation.

### **Moving Forward**

The main challenge for institutions is reconsidering information from a citizen approach, and the publication of information of special interest to the population in accessible, reusable formats. It is important for citizens to appropriate the right given them by Access to Public Information Law for themselves and to exercise it. Thus, in

2014, attention must be redirected towards implementing mass-scale actions aimed at citizens. To this end, we recommend working on both defining strategies for raising awareness and formulating indicators that make it possible to quantify and more precisely evaluate the impact that these strategies have on citizens. Conducting broad citizen consultations or focus groups announced with sufficient advance notice can be suitable instruments for evaluating the degree to which citizens have assimilated information about their rights when dealing with government bodies. We also recommend continuing to work on overcoming bureaucratic holdups by using digital formats and defining baselines for requests and response times at government institutions.

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<sup>1</sup> Law No. 18,381, passed in 2008. Available at <http://bit.ly/LB0uK5>

<sup>2</sup> See graphics from the campaign on Open Government in Uruguay. Reporte de Auto-evaluación.

<sup>3</sup> Campaign contents are available from the following sites:

televised video: <http://bit.ly/1bNjBXH>

radio audio: [http://www.impo.com.uy/lenguaje\\_ciudadano\\_radio\\_y\\_tv.html](http://www.impo.com.uy/lenguaje_ciudadano_radio_y_tv.html)

urban actions: [http://www.impo.com.uy/lenguaje\\_ciudadano\\_activacion.html](http://www.impo.com.uy/lenguaje_ciudadano_activacion.html)

<sup>4</sup> UAIP Report 001 of 2 January 2013, available at <http://bit.ly/Mo656F>

<sup>5</sup> Responsible organizations are Open Data, Transparency and Access to Information (Datos Abiertos, Transparencia y Acceso a la información; DATA) and the Center for Archives and Access to Public Information (Centro de Archivos y Acceso a la Información Pública; CAinfo).

<sup>6</sup> “*Terminante dictamen obliga al Estado a facilitar y responder los pedidos de información hechos vía web/correo electrónico*” *Quesabes.uy Blog*, 19 April 2013, <http://www.quesabes.org/blog#1358356642>

## 2. Strengthen the Culture of Transparency

### Commitment Text

The Public Information Access Unit (UAIP) proposes to develop a set of actions so that those subject to the requirement are trained in Access to Public Information Law No. 18,381, which was passed in 2008, and are aware of the obligations involved as well as the UAIP's role in compliance. Entities involved are the Public Information Access Unit and AGESIC. The 2012 goal is to develop content for e-learning and applying it to those subject to the requirement.

Commitment Description						
Availability	Lead institution	UAIP (Public Information Access Unit) and AGESIC (Agency for Electronic Government and Information Society)				
	Supporting institutions	CAinfo (as a member of the Honorary Advisory Board on the Access to Public Information Law)				
	Point of contact specified?	No				
Specificity and Measurability		Low: Commitment language describes activity that is unclear, but can be construed as measurable with some interpretation on the part of the reader				
Relevance	OGP Grand Challenges	Improving public services, Increasing public integrity, More effectively managing public resources, Increasing corporate accountability				
	Relevant OGP Values	Transparency	Citizen Participation	Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency and Accountability	None
		✓		✓	✓	
Ambition						
New or pre-existing?		Potential Impact				
Pre-existing		Moderate: the commitment is a major step forward in the relevant public policy area, but remains limited in scale or scope				
Level of completion						
Start Date:		End Date:		Actual completion		Substantial
Unspecified		2012		Projected completion		Complete
Next steps						
Further work on basic implementation						

### What happened?

The main strategy for strengthening the culture of transparency during the Plan implementation period was for public institutions, whether governmental or not, to

designate points of contact for active and passive transparency, in accordance with Articles 41 and 56 of Decree 232/010 regulating Access to Public Information Law No. 18,381.<sup>1</sup> At the time that this report was prepared (November 2013), there were 152 points of contact designated as subjects obligated to the UAIP, which is considered a high number even though it is not 100% of the institutions legally subject to the requirement.<sup>2</sup> This achievement represents substantial completion of the underlying commitment.

In 2012, the UAIP organized workshops and training sessions for the points of contact for active and passive transparency on various topics. Two workshops are noteworthy because of their relevance:

- Workshop in classifying information, which made special reference to administrative criteria adopted by the supervisory body in relation to secret, reserved and confidential information, and exceptions consecrated in Article 8 of the Law.
- Workshop on access to public information indicators and the Active Transparency Assessment Model, which was focused on assessing the level of compliance with the active transparency provisions under Article 5 (Dissemination of Public Information) of the Access to Public Information Law and Article 38 of Regulatory Decree No. 232/010, which was first implemented in December 2012.

In August 2012, the UAIP conducted an online course on Law No. 18,381, aimed at government employees. The course was interactive, self-administered and could be taken by government employees or any citizen wishing to learn about general aspects of the Law.<sup>3</sup> In addition, training days were held for employees from 23 public institutions.<sup>4</sup>

### *Relevance*

This commitment is considered highly relevant in that it proposes to change the nature of the relationship between citizens and the public sector. In a government-centric society such as Uruguay in particular, moving towards of greater culture of transparency means granting citizens greater ability to monitor public management and place their requirements at the center of the government's attention.

### *Moving Forward*

There are four recommendations related to this commitment.

1. Since advances in the organizational culture of transparency are almost exclusively aligned with the dimension of passive transparency, we recommend focusing the new Plan on active transparency actions.
2. The Active Transparency Index 2013 published by CAinfo and Universidad Católica del Uruguay (UCU) recommends addressing the institutional weakness of some public institutions that do not have internal mechanisms for effective accountability. An easy-to-use channel of communication, such as a website, could be used.<sup>5</sup>
3. It is necessary to raise more awareness within organizations—not only that of people in government offices with operational responsibility in the matter, but also—and most especially—that of the heads of organizations and leaders of political parties. As the CAinfo-UCU report indicates, “in order for the issue of transparency to transfer to the design and management of information published on institutional websites, it is necessary to move towards



conceptualization of this issue as part of the Government's strategy for communicating with citizens."<sup>6</sup>

4. Finally, it is recommended that indicators be used to allow monitoring of entities' performance vis-à-vis the availability of information of interest to citizens on the Internet, the degree to which it is up-to-date, its completeness, its accessibility, and its veracity. Only by defining measurable indicators and clear time frames will it be possible to properly monitor how goals are met. This will make it possible to establish bases for developing a model for assessing active transparency in the future.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Law No. 18381 available at: <http://bit.ly/LB0uK5>

Decree 232/010 available at <http://bit.ly/1ep5M63>

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Mariana Gatti from the AGESIC Legal Services Area.

<sup>3</sup> The course is available at the UAIP portal at <http://www.uaip.gub.uy/e-learning/player.html>

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries, National Port Administration, National Meat Institute, Government Sanitation Works, Universidad del Trabajo del Uruguay, Association of Accountants, Economists and Business Administrators, Ministry of National Defense, Banco Hipotecario del Uruguay, Montevideo City Hall, Ministry of Tourism and Sport, State Audit Tribunal, Citizen Service Centers, Departmental Junta of Maldonado, Ministry of Housing, Territorial Organization and the Environment, Internal Revenue Department, Ministry of the Economy and Finance, Ministry of Social Development, National Public Education Administration, National Public Administration School, National Intelligence Department, Maldonado City Hall, National Colonization Institute, Ministry of Labor and Social Security.

<sup>5</sup> Report on the Online Active Transparency Index, CAinfo-UCU, 2013, available at <http://bit.ly/1ijIGi7>

<sup>6</sup> Report on the Online Active Transparency Index.

<sup>7</sup> Model for assessing active transparency. Indicators and items to be assessed, Access to Public Information Unit (UAIP), Montevideo, November, 2012. Available at: <http://bit.ly/1i4nADo>

### 3. National Transparency Prize

#### Commitment Text

*National Transparency Prize. This prize aspires to be the highest level of national recognition for public institutions that distinguish themselves through their work to achieve transparency and that are, therefore, role models. The entities involved are: the Presidency of Uruguay, the Public Information Access Unit (UAIP) and the Agency for Electronic Government and Information Society (AGESIC). Different awards will be made each year, with the first awarded in 2012.*

Commitment Description						
Answerability	Lead institution	UAIP (Public Information Access Unit) and AGESIC (Agency for Electronic Government and Information Society)				
	Supporting institutions	A member of the UAIP Advisory Council, representing the Legislative Branch, participated in the panel awarding the prize for the first time. At the second edition, CAinfo (as regular member of the Prize Assessment Committee) and Uruguay Transparente (as alternate member of the Prize Assessment Committee) were appointed.				
	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	Increasing public integrity, More effectively managing public resources, Increasing corporate accountability				
	Relevant OGP Values	Transparency	Citizen Participation	Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency and Accountability	None
		✓				
Ambition						
New or pre-existing?			Potential Impact			
New			Minor: The commitment is an incremental but positive step in the relevant policy area			
Level of completion						
Start Date:		End Date:		Actual completion		Complete
10 April 2012 (act launching the prize)		2012 (prize award during the year)		Projected completion		Complete
Next steps						
New commitment based on existing implementation						

### *What happened?*

In March 2012, the UAIP called up the public institutions of Uruguay to participate in the first awarding of the Transparency Prize,<sup>1</sup> thus completing this commitment. Some 14 projects from 10 institutions competed in three categories: Active Transparency, Passive Transparency and Culture of Transparency. These categories sought to address three different aspects in developing the concept of transparency in the public sector:

- **Active Transparency:** Projects to encourage, expand and deepen programs and/or actions aimed at making official information transparent on a proactive basis via its website. Whether or not projects are related to Article 5 of Law 18,381 will be taken into consideration, as the terms of reference clearly state.<sup>2</sup>
- **Passive Transparency and Information Systems:** Projects that seek to encourage the review and redesign of processes or systems for handling requests for access to information, which provide people with information from public institutions contained in resolutions, minutes, files, contracts. They are to be prepared over the course of public management, regardless of form, barring legal exceptions.
- **Culture of Transparency:** Projects to promote dissemination of issues related to transparency and the right to access to public information—both within public institutions and among citizens—including ways to institutionalize accountability and this right.

According to the terms of reference, the panel consisted of two members from the UAIP Advisory Board, one representative from the Executive Board, one representative from the Presidency and one representative from AGESIC. The ten institutions that presented projects received diplomas, and the winners were the Uruguayan National Accounts Division (Contaduría General de la Nación; CGN) (in the active transparency category), the National Development Corporation (Corporación Nacional para el Desarrollo; CONADE) (in the passive transparency category), the Central Bank of Uruguay (BCU) and the Ministry of Social Development (MIDES) (both in the culture of transparency category).<sup>3</sup>

For the second awarding of the Prize, whose deadline was on 30 August 2013, there were twice the number of candidates, totaling 24 projects and 14 institutions. On this occasion, a category for “files” was added to encourage good practices in saving information files and making them available. According to the resolution of the President of Uruguay, for the second awarding of the Prize (which is not included in Action Plan 2012) a civil society representative joined the prize award panel. Those appointed were Mr. Edison Lanza (member of CAinfo), as a full member, and Mr. Pedro Cribari (member of Uruguay Transparente), as an alternate.<sup>4</sup>

### *Relevance*

The Prize can be considered a useful tool for this first phase of promoting a culture of transparency in the public sector. As various UAIP documents indicate, transparency does not naturally occur in organizations; rather, this culture must be created and, to this end, the prize is a valuable initiative.

### *Moving Forward*

The IRM research team recommends that goals be set to increase the number of public institutions participating in the prize and to significantly increase the number of projects presented. Having instituted the prize, validation mechanisms must be improved for future awards to ensure that there is no partiality. In addition, specific goals must be set, both in terms of institutions as well as the number of projects, to clearly assess whether they have been met. Furthermore, it would be desirable to put

goals into separate categories, specifying a minimum number of projects to be expected in each prize category.

Moreover, although there are legal restrictions due to the authority that the Law gives the UAIP, it is recommended that a plan of action be drawn up to extend the Transparency Prize to organizations outside the public sector (e.g., companies, civil society organizations, unions, etc.). To this end, it is essential to work on formulating collaboration agreements with second-degree platforms or organizations from the business sector and civil society. It is also recommended that prizes consider the degree to which information and communication technologies are used for the benefit of citizens and that they contain assessment plans to address this criterion.

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<sup>1</sup> Terms of reference for the first Transparency Prize, available at <http://www.uaip.gub.uy/PremioTransparencia/pdf/bases.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Law No. 18381 available at: <http://bit.ly/LB0uK5>

<sup>3</sup> To learn more about projects that have been awarded prizes, see the UAIP page <http://www.uaip.gub.uy/inicio/noticias/se+entrego+premio+a+la+transparencia>

<sup>4</sup>Resolution of the Uruguayan Presidency of 11 July 2013, <http://bit.ly/1fx1DNF>

## 4. Citizen E-Participation

### Commitment Text

*This initiative encourages central administration institutions to have standards and models for citizen participation and interaction using electronic channels. The lead institution is AGESIC. Goals for 2012 are to define a model for citizen participation and create an electronic citizen participation platform as well as to develop and promote policies to guide implementation of citizen participation.*

Commitment Description						
Answerability	Lead institution	AGESIC (Agency for Electronic Government and Information Society)				
	Supporting institutions	None specified				
	Point of contact specified?	No				
Specificity and Measurability		None: Commitment language does not contain verifiable deliverables or milestones.				
Relevance	OGP Grand Challenges	Improving public services, Increasing corporate accountability				
	Relevant OGP Values	Transparency	Citizen Participation	Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency and Accountability	None
			✓	✓	✓	
Ambition						
New or pre-existing?			Potential Impact			
New			Minor: The commitment is an incremental but positive step in the relevant policy area			
Level of completion						
Start Date:		End Date:		Actual completion		Limited
Unspecified		2012		Projected completion		Complete
Next steps						
Revise commitment to make it more achievable or measurable						

### What happened?

Of the two goals related to this commitment, limited progress has been made in formulating a model of citizen participation, and the creation of a Citizen Participation Platform was discarded. Although the construction of a platform was originally a central strategy in creating the model, AGESIC ultimately decided to discard it for the following reasons:

1. Uruguay already has institutional mechanisms of direct democracy that function correctly and are suited to affecting issues of public policy. Therefore, mechanisms such as “e-petitioning, which are considered priority in other countries as channels for citizens to express themselves, are not priority in the case of Uruguay.”
2. The lack of training and culture with regard to e-participation in Uruguayan public institutions makes one think that developing a platform such as the one indicated in the goal would not result in a better liaison between the citizen and the State. Those responsible for this commitment felt that it was first necessary to train government employees in the value of citizen participation in general and in e-participation in particular.<sup>1</sup>
3. The platform’s costs also discouraged implementation of the cited goal. Dialogue with those in charge of the IREKIA platform in the Basque Country (pioneer platform in e-participation) provided information on the disproportionate cost in relation to the number of users who actually participated in it.<sup>2</sup>

Based on these considerations, AGESIC rethought the model for participation and gave priority to e-participation initiatives that may be less broad, but connected to citizens’ daily lives. Thus, opportunities for electronic consultation were introduced to the website [tramites.gub.uy](http://tramites.gub.uy) and also to the website of the Ministry of Public Health (MSP), as channels through which citizens could express opinions on the quality, veracity and currency of available information. Work was also done to promote support from and collaboration with government bodies to encourage the proper and rational use of electronic citizen participation tools, including:

1. “Guía de Buenas Prácticas en temas de e-participation” [E-Participation Good Practices Guide]. This is a publication aimed at government employees that offers a first approach to the issue of citizen participation and the use of information and communication technologies to channel and promote such participation.<sup>3</sup>
2. Training workshops aimed at government employees to provide basic concepts about citizen participation, identify opportunities to develop e-participation in government bodies and use different tools in its implementation.<sup>4</sup> Some 40 government employees have been trained; therefore, the desired level of coverage has not yet been achieved.
3. Series of studies and surveys related to e-participation issues in order to evaluate possibilities for developing e-participation tools.<sup>5</sup>

### **Relevance**

According to IRM researchers, implemented actions have had little impact on mobilizing citizens to participate in the public debate and contribute towards the development of new forms of governance. However, in interviews one sees clear awareness of the need to advance in this direction more decidedly and energetically. The document presenting the “Guía de buenas prácticas” itself proposes a concept of participation that “involves citizens’ clear intention to be able to interact with the Administration and representatives to in some way influence decisions made. A citizen, in addition to his rights as sovereign, is a user. As such, he may contribute towards designing, monitoring or evaluating the public benefits, services or programs he uses.”<sup>6</sup>

### **Moving Forward**

To date, the predominant vision for participation emphasizes gathering comments and suggestions from citizens to obtain better information from government agencies and striving for effective management. The IRM team recommends moving more decidedly

towards implementing mechanisms of participation that allow greater citizen engagement. A new phase of implementing e-participation should emphasize opening channels that make it possible to improve citizens' access to the State and not merely the State's access to citizens. In this regard, we recommend working to create a legal framework—a comprehensive law—that supports the participative dimension of the public sector and give citizens guarantees while taking advantage of information and communication technologies to ensure these aims.

Finally, the new plan must include more specific actions for work and coordination with civil society stakeholders. Since the State has refused to create more general opportunities for e-participation, thereby favoring almost exclusive participation in aspects that can be responded to by the Administration, there is an opportunity for civil society to act in monitoring and oversight role. This challenge requires identifying stakeholders, developing abilities, and building on the capacity for dialogue to fill this void

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Juan Bertón, head of the AGESIC E-participation Area, conducted on 10 October 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Juan Bertón.

<sup>3</sup> Available at el website de la AGESIC en <http://bit.ly/1cZvmLQ>

<sup>4</sup> Based on the document “Taller: Diseño de Instancias de Participación Ciudadana para Organismos” facilitated by Juan Bertón.

<sup>5</sup> Also, at the time of this research, two studies were being headed by AGESIC: one concerning e-commerce and the other on digital citizens. The results of these studies will be available at the end of 2013 and will be used to assess a starting point for and to formulate future strategies for e-participation. The studies are being conducted by the companies Opción Consultores (digital citizens) and Grupo Radar (e-commerce).

<sup>6</sup> “Normas Técnicas,” AGESIC, <http://bit.ly/1aCN0IG>



## 5. Open Government Data

### Commitment Text

Promote openness in public data by creating an Open Government Data platform ([datos.gub.uy](http://datos.gub.uy)) and plan for raising awareness about and disseminating open government data at the national level. The lead institution is AGESIC. In November 2012, the catalogue of official data, a community of open data and manuals targeting various public groups (civil society, developers and citizens in general) are expected.

Commitment Description						
Answerability	Lead institution	AGESIC (Agency for Electronic Government and Information Society)				
	Supporting institutions	None specified				
	Point of contact specified?	No				
Specificity and Measurability		Moderate: Commitment language describes objectively verifiable activity, but does not specify milestones or products.				
Relevance	OGP Grand Challenges	Increasing public integrity, More effectively managing public resources, Increasing corporate accountability				
	Relevant OGP Values	Transparency	Citizen Participation	Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency and Accountability	None
		✓			✓	
Ambition						
New or 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:		End Date:		Actual completion		Substantial
2012		November 2012		Projected completion		Complete
Next steps						
Further work on basic implementation						

### What happened?

In 2012, the Government of Uruguay created a public data portal ([datos.gub.uy](http://datos.gub.uy)) that currently has data provided by 18 government bodies, allowing access to information from the following in particular:

- Statistics from the Ministry of Tourism

- Government procurement data
- Customs data
- Consumer price system
- Public transportation information
- Census data and household surveys
- Education observatory

Furthermore, as of December 2012, the National Catalogue of Open Data is available. The Catalogue includes 15 institutions and makes it possible to access government websites and resources offering public information from a single point. As part of the dissemination strategy, two guides on open data were prepared: “Guía básica de apertura and de reutilización de datos abiertos de gobierno”<sup>1</sup> and “Guía rápida de publicación en datos.gub.uy.”

Also, the first open data competition (dateidea.uy) was held to identify open government data and disseminate all of the ways it can be used, whether public, private, commercial, free, personal or otherwise. Dateidea.uy is an initiative organized by AGESIC and is supported by the National Statistics Institute (INE), the College of Engineering (FING), the Government Assessment and Management Area (AGEV -OPP), Montevideo City Hall (IM) and Open Data, Transparency and Access to Information (Datos Abiertos, Transparencia y Acceso a la información; DATA). The competition invitation was sent to a broad public that included students, entrepreneurs, companies, organizations, journalists, and activists.<sup>2</sup>

On 30 October 2013, the nomination period for the second competition, Dateidea 2013, closed. For this new award, new categories were proposed to recognize the best applications, the best journalistic articles, the best displays, the best set of data published by institutions, and the best mobile device applications (Apps) using data from the procedural guide.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, an initiative with relevance within the framework of this commitment was the first Regional Open Data Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean organized by AGESIC, OMIDYAR Network, the World Bank, IDRC Canada, CEPAL, OD4D, W3C, Red Gealc and DATA. More than 100 international and local exhibitors participated in this conference.<sup>4</sup> And it was simultaneously broadcast on the website confdatosabiertos.uy with support from Adinet.tv with more than 1900 hits. In addition, all discussions were covered and discussed on the social networks Facebook and Twitter, with their respective hashtags.

These actions represent substantial completion of this commitment.

### **Relevance**

The advances recorded in the Open Data Area have great transformative potential for the future. By creating the open data portal, the first steps have been taken to be able to access, from a single point, the different government websites and resources offering public information. Also worthy of note is the work of the Open Data Group, whereby excellent dialogue and participation have been obtained from various units, institutions and academics. This opportunity has been used to push forward the agenda and should be empowered and formalized. It is, in fact, one of the Government of Uruguay’s best practices in the matter.<sup>5</sup>

Despite these advances, we can see that many institutions continue publishing information according to their own guidelines. Therefore, it is necessary to continue expanding the National Open Data Catalogue to present information on a centralized basis, thereby giving it greater visibility and making it easier to use and access.<sup>6</sup>

### *Moving Forward*

After having taken a significant step in raising awareness and placing the issue on the agenda, IRM researchers recommend taking actions to:

- Substantially increase the number of public institutions that publish information in the Open Data Catalogue;
- Improve the categorization of data published;
- Continue providing training on open data, segmented for the different stakeholders, such as government employees, journalists and developers;
- Continue to hold prize competitions and to organize awareness-raising events; and
- Define standardization criteria for the growing number of institutions publishing government data that is not in open formats.

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<sup>1</sup> Terms of Reference for Concurso Dateidea 2013 available at <http://www.agesic.gub.uy/innovaportal/v/2857/1/agesic/bases.html>

<sup>2</sup> Available at [http://www.agesic.gub.uy/innovaportal/file/2478/1/guia\\_basica\\_datos\\_abiertos.pdf](http://www.agesic.gub.uy/innovaportal/file/2478/1/guia_basica_datos_abiertos.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> A list of operative applications presented to the competition is available at: <http://bit.ly/19jmOge>

There are also various applications included in the catalogue of open data at <http://catalogodatos.gub.uy/apps>

<sup>4</sup> Conference website <http://confdatosabiertos.uy/>

<sup>5</sup> Opinion contributed for this research by Fabrizio Scrollini, specialist in Open Data and Access to Public Information and member of the organization DATA.

<sup>6</sup> Based on “Guía rápida de publicación en datos.gub.uy”

## 6. Digital Literacy Plan

### Commitment Text

Establish the digital literacy plan. This plan is part of the country's macro efforts to universalize access to and use of information and communication technologies. The following institutions are involved: National Telecommunications Administration (ANTEL), Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), National Civil Service Office (ONSC) and AGESIC. In 2015, it is expected to reach 100,000 adults.

Commitment Description						
Answerability	Lead institution	Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC)				
	Supporting institutions	ANTEL (National Telecommunications Administration), ONSC (National Civil Service Office), and AGESIC (Agency for Electronic Government and Information Society)				
	Point of contact specified?	No				
Specificity and Measurability		Moderate: Commitment language describes objectively verifiable activity, but does not specify milestones or products.				
Relevance	OGP Grand Challenges	Improving public services, Creating safer communities, Increasing corporate accountability				
	Relevant OGP Values	Transparency	Citizen Participation	Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency and Accountability	None
		✓	✓		✓	
Ambition						
New or pre-existing?			Potential Impact			
Pre-existing			Transformative: The commitment entails a reform that could potentially transform "business as usual" in the relevant policy area			
Level of completion						
Start Date:		End Date:		Actual completion		Limited
2010		2015		Projected completion		Substantial
Next steps						
Further work on basic implementation						

### What happened?

Since 2007, together with the creation of the so-called MEC Centers, outreach workshops began to train adults in computers. These targeted towns with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants as these were considered to have the most problems with

accessibility, use and appropriation of technologies.<sup>1</sup> Since 2010, these workshops have become the National Digital Literacy Plan. There are currently 118 centers nationwide.

Between 2007 and the present, 43,500 people have participated in the training workshops, of which 80% were women aged between 40 and 60. The workshops' specific objectives include providing elements to develop basic competencies that allow participants to obtain information, carry out procedures, communicate and participate using the network. Progress towards the goal of literacy for 100,000 adults by 2015 can be considered well underway, but has been considered slow since 2007. Moreover, measuring the quality of the training delivered and its effect on the participating groups is difficult.

There are other initiatives that contribute towards the goal of adult digital literacy and could have an impact on the degree to which this goal is achieved, although measurability is quite limited.

1. The Ceibal Plan has a digital literacy program for families within critical contexts known as "Aprender tod@s."<sup>2</sup> The program was launched in early 2011 as a result of certain parents' interest in better using the computers that the Ceibal Plan had given to their children. The program is estimated to have reached some 8,200 families.<sup>3</sup>
2. The Ministry of Social Development (MIDES) also has some relevant components, such as the "Uruguay Trabaja" program which, besides providing specific training and information about rights, includes a digital literacy module. This initiative targets unemployed people aged between 18 and 65 with limited resources. Its primary objective is to increase their employability.
3. On 10 September 2013, AGESIC and ObservaTIC, of the College of Social Sciences of the Universidad de la República, organized a forum as part of a broader initiative known as "Ciclo de Foros Uruguay digital: ¿Cómo estamos?" to study, document and disseminate the country's status and achievements related to digital matters, using the country brand Uruguay Digital as a platform.

### **Relevance**

This commitment is highly relevant given the country's demographics and recent policies on access to information and citizen participation, which depend on citizens having a certain level of computer knowledge. Consequently, the digital literacy plan has defined adults as the target audience because they risk being left behind in accessing the information and knowledge society.

Finally, it is necessary to recognize that the goal of reaching 100,000 adults by 2015 is ambitious. Data gathered prior to preparing the digital literacy plan showed that the "country's main deficiency lay in the territories, meaning that people in the capital were using and accessing PCs and the Internet far more than people in the provinces, and the same relationship was found between departmental capitals and more sparsely populated areas."<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the strategy of using MEC Centers is particularly appropriate as an opportunity to promote digital literacy since towns having fewer than 5,000 inhabitants are given priority.

### **Moving Forward**

Following are two key actions for improving the outcome of this commitment:

1. In addition to the actions carried out by the MEC Centers, strategies to strengthen and monitor the impact of related initiatives should be developed.

Given the massive scope of the proposed goal, in order to reach the desired coverage, it is essential to consider expanding the community of stakeholders.

2. Because there are no mechanisms for control or accountability in issues of digital literacy, levels of citizen pressure are low in the event of non-compliance. This is due in part to the limited autonomous opportunities for civil society to monitor and control these issues and the strong concentration of human resources in public institutions qualified in these subjects.<sup>5</sup> Within this scenario, IRM researchers give priority to strengthening civil society stakeholders and networks related to this issue. The business stakeholder should also be considered a partner who can help reach the established goal. The creation of a “community of stakeholders” is essential, not only as a complement to governmental action, but also with regard to its control and monitoring function.

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<sup>1</sup> Centers of the Ministry of Education and Culture. These are educational and cultural areas created to facilitate access to education, scientific and technological innovation, and cultural products and services, implementing policies of democratization and decentralization. <http://centrosmec.org.uy/>

<sup>2</sup> The Ceibal Plan seeks to promote digital inclusion as a way to facilitate greater access to education and culture. One of its main activities is delivering a portable computer to every public school student. <http://www.ceibal.org.uy>

<sup>3</sup> Interview with sociologist Matías Dodel, member of AGESIC responsible for monitoring Digital Agenda goals.

<sup>4</sup> “Plan de Alfabetización Digital,” available at: <http://bit.ly/1n4Fh71>

<sup>5</sup> There are only two initiatives outside the governmental domain: One is ObservaTIC of the College of Social Sciences of the Universidad de la Republica and the other is OSC CDI, which manages “Telecentros” for digital citizens.

## 7. Government Purchasing and Contracting Agency

### Commitment Text

Launch the Government Purchasing and Contracting Agency. Purchasing is a vital component of a country's public sector, which links the financial system to economic and social results. To a large extent the status of public purchasing determines the governance and performance of community services and crosses practically all areas of planning, program management and budgets. The Uruguayan Presidency is the lead institution. This agency is expected to be installed over the next five years.

Commitment Description						
Answerability	Lead institution	Uruguayan Presidency				
	Supporting institutions	None specified				
	Point of contact specified?	No				
Specificity and Measurability		Moderate: Commitment language describes objectively verifiable activity, but does not specify milestones or products.				
Relevance	OGP Grand Challenges	Improving public services, More effectively managing public resources, Increasing corporate accountability				
	Relevant OGP Values	Transparency	Citizen Participation	Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency and Accountability	None
		✓		✓	✓	
Ambition						
New or pre-existing?		Potential Impact				
Pre-existing		Moderate: the commitment is a major step forward in the relevant public policy area, but remains limited in scale or scope				
Level of completion						
Start Date:		End Date:		Actual completion		Complete
2011		2013		Projected completion		Complete
Next steps						
New commitment based on existing implementation						

### What happened?

The Government Purchasing and Contracting Agency (ACCE) was established by the 2008 Accountability Law, but implemented in late 2011, thereby fulfilling this



commitment. Significant actions for the institutional strengthening of the agency include:

1. Preparing the agency's strategic plan;<sup>1</sup>
2. Designing the organizational structure that the agency must have to implement said strategic plan;<sup>2</sup>
3. Identifying complementary provisions required to implement the strategic plan;<sup>3</sup>
4. Designing the operating plan to set up the agency and its respective budget;
5. Preparing an estimated budget for the first 3 years of the agency's operation.

In October 2012, the proposal for the ACCE's organizational design was approved, which included the General Coordination Office, two advisory areas (communications and observatory) and five management offices (innovation and projects, operations, regulation, technology and support services). Based on this organizational design, the working team was adapted based on the government purchasing project.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to work underway for the support and technological development of the government purchasing system, creation of the ACCE entailed new projects. The 2008 Accountability Law introduced substantial reforms, such as the Unique Register for Government Suppliers (Registro Único de Proveedores del Estado; RUPE). Creating the RUPE sought to facilitate bidders' work, encourage better bidder participation and procure maximum efficiency in government purchasing procedures. To this end, the law established the requirement to be registered and authorized with the RUPE to enter into contracts with any government entity.

The Law also charged the Executive Branch with regulating this register, a responsibility laid down in the regulatory decree of 21 May 2013.<sup>5</sup> This decree assigned specific jurisdictions to the ACCE, expanding the jurisdiction indicated in the 2011 law and, in fact, resulting in the actual creation and launching of the Agency, headed by a board consisting of representatives and employees from various government institutions. In the first quarter of 2013, before the system was implemented throughout the government, three implementing units were launched as pilots: the National Accounts Division, AGESIC, and the National Treasury. The website [www.comprasestatales.gub.uy](http://www.comprasestatales.gub.uy) was also renovated.

The ACCE also took the lead in formulating two new and important procedures:

- The General Terms and Conditions for Non-personal Services and Supplies, the proposal for which was presented and sent to the State Audit Tribunal, for which a decision has not yet been made; and
- The General Terms and Conditions for Public Works, which was first drafted in 2012, but which has not yet been sent to the State Audit Tribunal.

ACCE's annual minutes contain an exhaustive review of its actions.<sup>6</sup>

### *Relevance*

IRM researchers consider setting up the RUPE relevant because it makes improvements possible in the relationship between the State and its suppliers, eliminates duplicated procedures, reduces costs for both parties and makes information about government purchasing available to citizens so that different forms of social auditing can be carried out. The RUPE implies a fundamental change in the Uruguayan government's purchasing and contracting. Previously, there were more than 50 registers of suppliers dispersed in different public institutions. Now there is a single register, which helps make processes and decisions more efficient. Using the RUPE, all purchasing units have access to suppliers' information, their purchasing history and other background. Meanwhile, the information entered by an institution becomes available to the State in its entirety and

to citizens. This availability increases efficiency in uploading and managing information, thereby allowing citizen monitoring and control. However, as recommended below, transparency is important, not only among government bodies, but also between the Government and its citizens.

### *Moving Forward*

The IRM researchers recommend:

- Continuing to work on setting up the RUPE so that it is adopted not only by the central administration, but by all government bodies. To this end, it is important to increase training events and disseminate information about the register, which will help raise more awareness of the need to make government purchasing transparent.
- Implementing the Government Purchasing Observatory (mentioned by the General Coordinator of the ACCE)<sup>7</sup> since it involves a highly valuable instrument, both for public management and for citizens to exercise control, monitoring and auditing. In addition to increasing the levels of transparency, efficiency, probity in government purchasing, it increases the opportunities for Government transparency as well as opportunities for citizen participation.
- Moving ahead in implementing the new modes of contracting that suit the needs of government agencies. Law No. 18,834<sup>8</sup> proposes two new modes, which must be incorporated by the ACCE: the trading floor (or Dutch auction, which is useful when the object is precise and easy to determine) and framework agreements (agreements entered into by the proper authority, ACCE, with one or more suppliers) that make it possible to ensure that the respective information meet open standards.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at: <http://www.comprasestatales.gub.uy/inicio/institucional/plan-estrategico>

<sup>2</sup> Available at: <http://www.comprasestatales.gub.uy/inicio/institucional/organigrama/>

<sup>3</sup> CPA Ferrere was the consulting firm selected to assist in designing and implementing these actions. Source: <http://bit.ly/1aQr6Ct>

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Alicia Alonso, General Agency Coordinator since its inception.

<sup>5</sup> Files of the Uruguayan Presidency, available at <http://bit.ly/1dUPXPU>

<sup>6</sup> Available at <http://bit.ly/1dSpvNo>

<sup>7</sup> Information contributed by Alicia Alonso, General Coordinator of the Government Purchasing and Contracting Agency (Agencia de Compras y Contrataciones del Estado; ACCE), in an interview conducted during this research.

<sup>8</sup> Accountability Law 18,834 available at: <http://bit.ly/1gH98kk>

## 8. Government Resource Planning (GRP)

### Commitment Text

*This is a planning, information and management system that introduces efficiency and efficacy in the use of an institution's financial and material resources. The institutions participating in the pilot are: AGESIC, the Uruguayan Presidency and the Ministry of Economy and Finance. The goal is for all ministries to have a solution supporting the administrative management in one of the "Implementing Units" by the year 2015, based on the Electronic Government Platform (Plataforma de Gobierno Electrónico; PGE) for exchanging information among participating systems.*

Commitment Description						
Answerability	Lead institution	AGESIC (Agency for Electronic Government and Information Society), Uruguayan Presidency, and the Ministry of Economy and Finance				
	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	Improving public services, Increasing public integrity, More effectively managing public resources, Increasing corporate accountability				
	Relevant OGP Values	Transparency	Citizen Participation	Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency and Accountability	None
						✓
Ambition						
New or pre-existing? Pre-existing		Potential Impact Moderate: the commitment is a major step forward in the relevant public policy area, but remains limited in scale or scope				
Level of completion						
Start Date: 2012		End Date: 2015		Actual completion		Substantial
				Projected completion		Substantial
Next steps						
New commitment based on existing implementation						

### *What happened?*

The acronym GRP refers to “Government Resource Planning” and is a planning, information and management system that makes it possible to introduce efficiency and efficacy in the use of an institution’s financial and material resources. The tool was created in the private sector (Enterprise Resource Planning; ERP) and was later extended to the public sector.

Between May and November 2012, a team of technicians from AGESIC, the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) and the Uruguayan Presidency prepared a Master Plan that included the design for a Sole Replicable Model (Modelo Único Replicable; MUR) for the entire administration. Preparing the Master Plan entailed surveying, designing and setting parameters for the K2B tool<sup>1</sup> for existing processes between the three institutions that participated in the pilot phase and defining interfaces with crosscutting systems. This work constitutes one of the principal achievements to date, to which end more than 7,000 hours of work were invested, some 13 documents were prepared to allow implementation and replication at other institutions, and some 140 training workshops were organized, at which 80 employees from the three institutions participated.<sup>2</sup>

The first phase of the project concluded on 13 June 2013 with the launching of the GRP at AGESIC. At the time this report was written, work on a new phase had already begun. This means setting up this tool for use at the Uruguayan Presidency for a pilot project in 2013 and launching it in the first quarter of 2014. At this time, the MEF is in the planning phase. This represents substantial completion according to the planned timeframes for this commitment.

### *Relevance*

For public institutions, the GRP becomes a relevant tool because it allows an interface with other data subsystems, such as the Government Purchasing System (SICE), the Financial Information System (SIIF) and other crosscutting systems of information. Until now, public institutions had to upload information twice—first for their own records and then for the comprehensive systems of the central administration (SICE, SIIF), without receiving direct benefits for contributing to the centralized data systems

From the open government perspective, it is not clear how this system could expressly improve transparency for citizens. And, although the actions taken offer a solid foundation for progress, with good opportunities for meeting the goal within the established timeframe, the GRP reaches a very limited number of public institutions.

### *Moving Forward*

To replicate the tool at other government agencies, progress must be made in developing a conceptual model that makes it possible to interconnect institutions, according to the general coordinator of the ACCE. Although the original plan was to develop this model, it was not possible to make any headway due to insufficient resources. In any case, from the experience accrued by the team that worked on the early phases of this project, we understand that the necessary capacity to develop the conceptual model has been created, without the need to outsource.

In this regard, we recommend that the goal for 2014 be to give priority to developing a conceptual model to standardize use of the tool at all institutions, regardless of the specific tool that they are using. This will make it possible for all institutions to become connected to the main crosscutting data systems, such as the SICE and the SIIF and to others, such as the International Loans System, the Payroll System and the Electronic File System.

To successfully apply this tool, we consider it essential to pay attention to changes in management processes at the organizational level. Experience gained in preparing this report suggests especially working on training and motivating government employees to foster high levels of commitment and a clear perception of benefits from the change process. This preliminary work is required to tolerate the difficulties and frustrations usually associated with migrating to new information management systems.

Finally, we also recommend giving priority to communication about the benefits these tools offer citizens, giving concrete examples of the impact using these tools will have on their dealings with the State. This means attending to the communicational and participative aspects of the change process, considering the citizen as a priority outside client. Implementing the GRP based on the concept of a relationship with the citizen could make this goal relevant to open government in terms of the OGP value of improving transparency, allowing citizens to have real-time information about budgetary aspects of the administration (for example, knowing the administration's volume of purchasing, who the supplier was, what amount was purchased and at what price).

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<sup>1</sup> K2B is a tool that allows institutions' administrative processes to operate in an integrated manner. It was created by the Uruguayan company Genexus.

<sup>2</sup> Data provided in an interview with Karime Ruibal, head of Crosscutting Projects, Institutions and Processes, AGESIC.

## 9. Electronic File System

### Commitment Text

One of the objectives planned for 2015 is for the entire central administration to have an electronic file system. The following institutions are involved: AGESIC and entities involved in installation. The goal for 2012 is to set up this system in at least 5 government institutions.

Commitment Description						
Answerability	Lead institution	AGESIC (Agency for Electronic Government and Information Society)				
	Supporting institutions	Institutions where the electronic file is installed				
	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	Improving public services, Increasing public integrity, More effectively managing public resources				
	Relevant OGP Values	Transparency	Citizen Participation	Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency and Accountability	None
						✓
Ambition						
New or pre-existing?			Potential Impact			
Pre-existing			Moderate: the commitment is a major step forward in the relevant public policy area, but remains limited in scale or scope			
Level of completion						
Start Date:		End Date:		Actual completion		Complete
2012		2012		Projected completion		Complete
Next steps						
New commitment based on existing implementation						

### What happened?

The commitment was completed because the electronic file system was set up at the:

1. Ministry of the Interior
2. Ministry of Labor and Social Security
3. State Audit Tribunal

4. National Statistics Institute
5. National Internal Audit Office

At two institutions, implementation is fully underway:

1. Social Security Department (BPS)
2. Ministry of Transportation and Public Works

Implementation is planned for the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries.<sup>1</sup>

Two pilot events held at the Ministry of Public Health (MSP) and at the Ministry of the Mining Industry and Energy (MIEM), in late 2008 and during 2009, did not achieve the objective of successfully setting up the electronic file system, but some lessons were learned:

- Set up the tool at AGESIC itself before presenting it to other institutions. In this way, the Agency has first-hand knowledge of the difficulties and challenging of setting it up.
- Only set up the tool at institutions that request it and have the institutional desire to take on this type of process. We found that success is not possible if, instead of having a clear institutional commitment, institutions adopt the tool as an obligation.
- Train and prepare the organization for at least 6 months before implementing the electronic file system. In addition, the institution must meet some requirements related to the availability of adequate equipment and participation in training.

### **Relevance**

Using this type of application makes it possible to establish a new, more convenient and modern relationship between citizens and the different government institutions. Although not explicitly stated in the commitment as written, the benefits include the fact that the electronic file system makes it possible to:

- Increase transparency in public administration actions.
- Improve access to information.
- Modernize and improve citizen services, optimizing processing and response times.
- Encourage development of Electronic Government in Uruguay.<sup>2</sup>

However, in order to achieve these objectives, the electronic file must have traceability and routing, as explained below.

### **Moving Forward**

We recommend giving priority to and implementing two electronic file functions: routing and traceability, which can have a direct impact on citizens. This is an aspect in which no progress has yet been made. Routing refers to the possibility of the file being able to travel over a pre-established route, passing through different sections within the same institution or moving from one institution to another. Traceability refers to the possibility of determining, at any time, the status of the file, identifying the units that have so far approved it, and the remaining phases.

#### **Routing**



At the time of this report, the electronic file system had not yet been implemented in all public institutions in order to make interconnection possible. According to the point of contact for this commitment, there are great hopes for the first “electronic connection” between the Central Bank of Uruguay and the State Audit Tribunal, which is expected to increase connections among public institutions.<sup>3</sup>

Another substantial recommendation would be to expand the electronic file system within institutions that have already begun using it since it cannot be said that 100% of their internal units have incorporated it. This situation also makes it difficult to fully adopt the new system, which causes obvious problems because the traditional file format cannot be abandoned as long as sectors of the administration are not part of the new system, resulting in a duplication of efforts and information.

#### Traceability

To date, except for possibly saving time, the electronic file system has had no specific, tangible benefits for citizens. Traceability, which allows the citizen to look up the electronic file to learn its status, has not yet materialized. According to the source consulted,<sup>4</sup> an application will soon be available to allow citizens to look up proceedings of the State Audit Tribunal. In any case, in view of the above, it seems important to continue accompanying the benefits that this tool provides to the public sector with specific, tangible benefits for citizens.

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<sup>1</sup> Information provided by Karime Ruibal, Institutions and Processes Area, in an interview conducted on 11 October 2013.

<sup>2</sup> AGESIC E-Gob [e-government] platform, available at <http://www.agesic.gub.uy/innovaportal/v/772/1/agesic/>

<sup>3</sup> Karime Ruibal, Institutions and Processes Area, AGESIC.

<sup>4</sup> Karime Ruibal, Institutions and Processes Area, AGESIC.

## 10. Uruguay Concursa

### Commitment Text

“Uruguay Concursa” has existed since 2011. It is a professional recruitment and hiring system used to find the best candidate for a government job ([www.uruguayconcursa.gub.uy](http://www.uruguayconcursa.gub.uy)). In 2012, implementation of the “in-person channel” module was planned, which will allow people wishing to do so to register and make applications at MEC centers and ministry offices. There are also plans to install the complete hiring process throughout the central administration, thereby making detailed follow-up possible and saving substantial time.

Commitment Description						
Answerability	Lead institution	National Civil Service Office				
	Supporting institutions	None specified				
	Point of contact specified?	No				
Specificity and Measurability		Low: Commitment language describes activity that is unclear, but can be construed as measurable with some interpretation on the part of the reader				
Relevance	OGP Grand Challenges	Increasing public integrity, More effectively managing public resources, Increasing corporate accountability				
	Relevant OGP Values	Transparency	Citizen Participation	Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency and Accountability	None
		✓		✓	✓	
Ambition						
New or pre-existing? Pre-existing			Potential Impact Minor: The commitment is an incremental but positive step in the relevant policy area			
Level of completion						
Start Date: 2012		End Date: 2012		Actual completion		Complete
				Projected completion		Complete
Next steps						
New commitment based on existing implementation						

### What happened?

Originally, in 2011, Uruguay Concursa aimed to publish job postings and receive applications from central administration institutions. Since April 2013, it has begun to

be used to publish postings from the entire public sector (including state-owned companies, autonomous bodies, and decentralized services).

The system makes it possible to manage the various stages of hiring including, most significantly, the ability to query the status of candidates' applications at any phase of the process. The second round of the selection process, which included the "back office" component and made it possible to manage the hiring process, was used in 2012 by all central administration institutions. The remaining institutions were using the tool to publish job postings, but were managing the hiring process directly.<sup>1</sup> In 2012, an "in-person channel" was implemented so that people with access issues could register and apply by going to a Citizen Service Center (Centros de Atención al Ciudadano; CAC) or to a Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) Center and authorize an employee to enter his or her data.

This year, a new feature was added for posting generic government jobs. This makes it possible to post jobs generically (e.g., administrative posts) and then fill them according to the requesting institutions' specific needs. In addition, the tool produces a list with an order of priority that makes the system transparent and can be used as a reference when other employees are desired.

Due to all of these components, this commitment is considered to have been completed.

### *Relevance*

The benefits of "Uruguay Concurso" boil down to two aspects. On one hand, the system provides greater transparency in that it permits queries by both the applicant and the participating institutions throughout the hiring process. Thus, the initiative strives to establish "a reliable link between citizens and the State that guarantees equal opportunity in accessing the Central Administration."<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, it saves significant time for the job posting and hiring process by facilitating communication and the exchange of information online, both between requesting institutions and between the Administration and job candidates.

### *Moving Forward*

There are no new proposals for improving or developing the system due to the upcoming hiring freeze in advance of the 2014 national elections. According to laws in force, 28 February is the last date for hiring public sector personnel. Therefore, IRM researchers suggest that this commitment not be included in the next Plan, but that it be reintroduced in 2015 after the new elected government takes office.

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<sup>1</sup> Information provided by Alexandra Fernández, ONSC employee and member of the Uruguay Concurso team, in an interview conducted on October 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Taken from <https://www.uruguayconcurso.gub.uy>

## 11. National Public Software

### Commitment Text

Within the framework of optimizing government resources, the objective is to develop a strategy for National Public Software. The goal for 2012 is to set up the National Public Software Portal and make the first application available according to the policies defined. The lead institution is AGESIC.

Commitment Description						
Answerability	Lead institution	AGESIC (Agency for Electronic Government and Information Society)				
	Supporting institutions	None specified				
	Point of contact specified?	No				
Specificity and Measurability		Moderate: Commitment language describes objectively verifiable activity, but does not specify milestones or products.				
Relevance	OGP Grand Challenges	Improving public services, Increasing public integrity, More effectively managing public resources, Increasing corporate accountability				
	Relevant OGP Values	Transparency	Citizen Participation	Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency and Accountability	None
		✓	✓		✓	
<b>Ambition</b>						
New or pre-existing?		Potential Impact				
New		Moderate: the commitment is a major step forward in the relevant public policy area, but remains limited in scale or scope				
<b>Level of completion</b>						
Start Date:		End Date:		Actual completion		Complete
Not specified		Not specified		Projected completion		Complete
<b>Next steps</b>						
New commitment based on existing implementation						

### What happened?

In December 2012, the Uruguayan Public Software Portal<sup>1</sup> was set up. Among other things, it contains a definition of public software, the purpose of the project, instructions on the procedure for publishing and using the public software, a catalog of public software,<sup>2</sup> and access to documents and forms that are useful for including a new

application in said catalogue. In turn, in late 2012 the electronic agenda was made available, thereby meeting the second goal of this commitment.

In 2008, the Montevideo City Hall developed the system to provide personal, individual service to the public. The system was released as Public Software in early 2010. Sometime afterwards, the Social Security Department (BPS) adopted the agenda with some adaptations for the institution's security and infrastructure, introducing new functionalities. Then began a phase of collaboration in which extensive, corrective maintenance of the application was planned. Currently, meanwhile, there are institutions, such as the Ministry of Housing, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Insurance Bank (BSE), which are in the process of adopting the tool with support from AGESIC to facilitate the exchange of information.

The second most used application is a PGE (Electronic Government Platform) Connector that allows public institutions to connect with each other. The application ensures interoperability among institutions according to computer security standards.

A public software working group was also set up that discusses the main approaches and definitions used in this field. The group consists of the:

- National Administration of Petroleum Products, Portland Cement and Alcoholic Beverages (Administración Nacional de Combustibles Alcohol y Portland; ANCAP).
- Social Security Department (BPS).
- Montevideo City Hall (IM).
- Ministry of Housing, Territorial Organization and the Environment (MVOTMA).
- AGESIC.

### *Relevance*

Even though the initial commitment, as written, is not clearly relevant to OGP values, the commitment to continue developing Uruguayan Public Software is a relevant objective in that it contributes towards:

- Optimizing and rationalizing resources (human, financial, etc.) to produce technological solutions of government or social interest.
- Sharing the knowledge generated in constructing and using software.
- Encouraging the exchange of good practices, recommendations and standards that boost the construction of quality public software.
- Promote a common space for creating communities generating the synergy required to optimize processes to create and develop software.
- Promote transparency through citizen participation in this initiative, taking advantage of new technology to achieve more effective, modern and responsible government.

Applications like this show how public software can be a mutually beneficial instrument, both for the institution and for the citizen. In addition, the tool allows institutions having less technical capacity to take advantage of work done by those with more, thereby contributing towards improving the tool for the benefit of future users.<sup>3</sup>

### *Moving Forward*

We recommend:

- Making it a priority for 2014 to increase the number of applications available in the catalogue beyond the 8 that existed in November 2013.
- Working towards creating a network of parties interested in improving available applications and making them available to the community.

- Determining the type of licensing to use. It has been possible to reach a consensus on a document that contains the terms and conditions for using the public software, but it is necessary to continue adjusting it as new users become involved in improving and publishing applications in this format.
- Finally, another priority is the need to involve civil society in the initiative to enrich the exchange with its knowledge and experience. Some civil society groups are working in this area and can be effectively involved in creating communities committed to improving and developing applications. In this way, the software's relationship to OGP values would be made clearer.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at: <http://bit.ly/1dSu1eR>

<sup>2</sup> The catalogue is accessible at: <http://bit.ly/1cZzZW6>

<sup>3</sup> Comments made by Javier Barreiro, member of the AGESIC Technology Area, in an interview conducted on 4 October 2013.

## 12. Online Processes and Procedures

### Commitment Text

*In 2012, besides identifying the procedures of most interest to citizens, indicators and models for simplifying procedures will be designed that will make it possible to follow the status of procedures online. At the end of the five-year period, it should be possible to access 80% of the Central Administration's most commonly used procedures online.*

Commitment Description						
Answerability	Lead institution	AGESIC (Agency for Electronic Government and Information Society)				
	Supporting institutions	None specified				
	Point of contact specified?	No				
Specificity and Measurability		Moderate: Commitment language describes objectively verifiable activity, but does not specify milestones or products.				
Relevance	OGP Grand Challenges	Improving public services, Increasing public integrity, More effectively managing public resources				
	Relevant OGP Values					
	Milestone	Transparency	Citizen Participation	Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency and Accountability	None
	1. Identify procedures of most interest to citizens	✓	✓		✓	
	2. Design models for simplifying procedures	✓	✓		✓	
Ambition						
Milestone		New or pre-existing?		Potential Impact		
1. Identify procedures of most interest to citizens		Pre-existing		Transformative: The commitment entails a reform that could potentially transform "business as usual" in the relevant policy area		
2. Design models for simplifying procedures		Pre-existing		Transformative: The commitment entails a reform that could potentially transform "business as usual" in the relevant policy area		
Level of completion						



<b>Milestone 1. Identify procedures of most interest to citizens</b>			
<b>Start Date:</b>	<b>End Date:</b>	<b>Actual completion</b>	Complete
2012	2012	<b>Projected completion</b>	Complete
<b>Milestone 2. Design models for simplifying procedures</b>			
<b>Start Date:</b>	<b>End Date:</b>	<b>Actual completion</b>	Substantial
2012	2012	<b>Projected completion</b>	Complete
<b>Next steps</b>			
1. Identify procedures of most interest to citizens		Maintain and monitor to ensure completion	
2. Design models for simplifying procedures		Further work on basic implementation	

### *What happened?*

The first component of this commitment has been completed while substantial progress has been made in the second.

The commitments established in Digital Agenda 2011-2015 stipulated that 80% of the procedures most used by citizens and 60% of the total volume of the administration's procedures should be online. Since meeting this goal was deemed impossible if procedures were tackled one at a time, consultancy services were commissioned with a view towards achieving the large-scale, standardized transformation of a broad range of procedures.<sup>1</sup> As part of this consultancy, in 2012, the most important procedures were identified according to the administration's interest, their value and citizens' interests. This was done using a survey on different aspects or attributes of the procedures (e.g., delays, ease of access, delivery time, office waiting time, etc.). This survey made it possible to develop a prioritization matrix of procedures for the administration's different institutions. Then a simplification model was developed based on four components: prioritization, standardization, change management, and communication with the public. A pilot experiment is being developed at the Ministry of Public Health. This pilot uses the aforementioned simplification matrix for certain procedures, such as the registration of university degrees and controlling prescriptions for psychotropic drugs.

In turn, in July 2013 the President of Uruguay approved Decree No. 177/013 on the simplification and modernization of administrative procedures.<sup>2</sup> Among other measures, the decree obligates all of the administration's institutions to submit, within a period of 120 days, plans of action for:

- Publishing each procedure they offer on their websites and on the Uruguayan Government Portal, with instructions.
- Analyzing the procedures they offer in order to assess their relevance and eliminate non-essential requirements, unless required by law.

### *Relevance*

Although not yet fully implemented, this commitment is highly relevant and transformative because it involves the Administration making citizens their focus instead of simply attending to the efficiency of the administration's internal processes. This is especially relevant when applied to universal procedures, such as the process of obtaining an identity document or voter registration card. AGESIC is working with

institutions of the central administration to define plans for simplifying procedures and putting them online. It is also working with other institutions, such as the Electoral Court, on a pilot project to take fingerprints using a scanner. In addition, the Court may consider including a digital agenda for making appointments and schedules.<sup>3</sup>

### *Moving Forward*

Firstly, the IRM researchers recommend compliance with the two principles established in the presidential decree for the simplification of procedures. Secondly, researchers recommend extending the pilot experiment conducted at the Ministry of Public Health to other ministries and other areas of the Administration in order to reach more procedures, giving priority to those most relevant to citizens. The 120 days that the decree stipulates for publishing the information on institutions' websites expired in December 2013; therefore, the procedures that each institution would simplify and place online should have been identified by that date.

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<sup>1</sup> Information provided by Marcelo Guinovart, AGESIC Director of Institutions and Processes, in an interview conducted on 3 October 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Available at: <http://www.impo.com.uy/bancodatos/tramites.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Information provided by Marcelo Guinovart, AGESIC Director of Institutions and Processes, in an interview conducted on 3 October 2013.

### 13. Citizen E-Funds

#### Commitment Text

*E-funds provide technical and financial support to Central Administration institutions for the development of electronic government solutions. These solutions seek to make innovations in the relationship between citizens and the public sector using technology. The lead institutions are: The Office of Planning and Budget, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, AGESIC and other institutions involved. In 2012, for the first time, citizens can participate by proposing procedures and services that they want to be online. The three best proposals will be implemented.*

Commitment Description						
Answerability	Lead institution	OPP (Office of Planning and Budget), MEF (Ministry of Economy and Finance), AGESIC (Agency for Electronic Government and Information Society)				
	Supporting institutions	Institutions involved in the selected ideas				
	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	Improving public services, Increasing public integrity, More effectively managing public resources				
	Relevant OGP Values	Transparency	Citizen Participation	Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency and Accountability	None
			✓		✓	
Ambition						
New or pre-existing?			Potential Impact			
New			Moderate: the commitment is a major step forward in the relevant public policy area, but remains limited in scale or scope			
Level of completion						
Start Date:		End Date:		Actual completion		Substantial
2012		2012		Projected completion		Complete
Next steps						
Further work on basic implementation						

#### What happened?

The fourth iteration of the Electronic Government E-funds appeared in 2012, for the first time asking citizens for proposals for putting processes and services online.<sup>1</sup>

Approximately 50 proposals were received through the AGESIC portal. Although the commitment required implementation of three proposals, five proposals were ultimately selected, given the interest they generated in the evaluation committee.<sup>2</sup> The five proposals selected were:

1. Open data presented by the Consumer Protection Department.
2. Ability to view this data using a mobile device.
3. Simplifying the procedure for obtaining passports.
4. Simplifying procedures for starting up a company.
5. Simplifying procedures for obtaining a voter registration card.

To date, the two proposals related to the Consumer Protection Department have been implemented, and the procedure for obtaining passports has been simplified so that a birth certificate is no longer required. Work is still underway to simplify procedures for registering a company due to the complexity entailed in several institutions being involved. In simplifying the procedure for obtaining a voter registration card, an agreement has been made between the Electoral Court and AGESIC to set up a digital agenda system that will be operational in early 2014. Due to these pending actions, this commitment is considered substantially complete.

### *Relevance*

For the first time, citizens have had the opportunity to propose improvements in public sector services and procedures. This made it possible to learn their priorities firsthand when making improvements to procedures and queries.

### *Moving Forward*

We recommend that proposals already approved continue to be carried out and, especially, that the line of e-funds be broadened and continued in relation to three important aspects:

1. Citizens' representatives participating in selection processes;
2. Not just making funds available to public institutions, but promoting the co-participation of civil society organizations;
3. Evaluating funds, including a focus on citizen services.

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<sup>1</sup> Information available at: <http://bit.ly/AhHGHc>

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Marcelo Guinovart, AGESIC Director of Institutions and Processes, conducted on 3 October 2013.

## 14. Single Electronic Windows

### Commitment Text

To help improve citizen services, this initiative suggests simplifying and unifying process so that the State presents a uniform front to citizens as an integrated institution. Lead institutions are AGESIC and other institutions involved. Throughout the five-year period, the aim is to incorporate and improve the following centralized single windows accessible via multiple channels, including by Internet and mobile devices: Single Citizen Window, Single Public Safety Window, Single Foreign Trade Window, Single Housing Window and Single Company Window.

Commitment Description						
Answerability	Lead institution	AGESIC (Agency for Electronic Government and Information Society)				
	Supporting institutions	Institutions involved in each window				
	Point of contact specified?	No				
Specificity and Measurability		Low: Commitment language describes activity that is unclear, but can be construed as measurable with some interpretation on the part of the reader				
Relevance	OGP Grand Challenges	Improving public services, More effectively managing public resources, Increasing corporate accountability				
	Relevant OGP Values	Transparency	Citizen Participation	Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency and Accountability	None
						✓
Ambition						
New or pre-existing?		Potential Impact				
New		Moderate: the commitment is a major step forward in the relevant public policy area, but remains limited in scale or scope				
Level of completion						
Start Date:		End Date:		Actual completion		Limited
2012		2015		Projected completion		Substantial
Next steps						
Revise commitment to make it more achievable or measurable						

### What happened?

This commitment was very difficult to evaluate because it includes a set of varied initiatives in different stages of completion. The notion of a “single window” entails the

idea of unifying processes previously been carried out within various institutions and putting them in a single location or allowing them to be resolved in a single forum. To move forward, agreements must be reached among public institutions that allow them to increase their interconnection and interoperability to avoid duplicating processes, to simplify procedures and to avoid requests for information that the administration already has.<sup>1</sup> All in all, it involves adopting public management with a citizen focus.

#### Single Company Window

More progress has been made towards this goal than others. It has been possible to integrate the processes for registering a company required by BPS, Banco de Seguros del Estado (BSE), MTSS and the Internal Revenue Service (DGI). With support from AGESIC, the service “Empresa en el día” was created, which makes it possible to open companies (corporations and limited liability companies) and single-shareholder companies (only in the Salto office) within approximately 24 hours from application.<sup>2</sup> These advances are directly related to actions taken as a result of Commitment 15 on citizens’ e-funds.

#### Single Foreign Trade Window (Ventanilla única de comercio exterior; VUCE)

Significant progress is being made in this area, although the system is not yet operational. The objective is to have a single entry point for conducting all procedures associated with imports, exports and transportation. To date, progress has been made in some pilot experiments and in the training phase, but it has not been possible to enter the production phase.<sup>3</sup>

#### Single Housing Window

Difficulties in identifying specific advances were found in this area, despite attempts to draft initiatives and coordinate the different public institutions involved. Within this context, it is considered positive that all information available on this issue has been centralized in the housing section of the Uruguayan Government Portal.<sup>4</sup> In view of the difficulty in coordinating actions and coordinating institutions, some reporting parties consider centralizing the information to be a prerequisite for achieving greater interoperability.

#### Single Citizen Window

The degree to which this commitment has been met is very difficult to assess because of its broad definition. Moreover, the initiative refers to a series of functions related to the Uruguayan Government Portal ([www.portal.gub.uy](http://www.portal.gub.uy)), a tool that, together with its constituent subportals, is a type of single information window for the entire administration. On the other hand, this initiative also includes the subportal [www.tramites.gub.uy](http://www.tramites.gub.uy), which makes it possible to view all of the central administration’s procedures and the requirements for initiating them and even carry them out online when they are available in this medium. As José Clastornik, Executive Director of AGESIC, said to the press, the reality is that “of the nearly one thousand procedures that currently exist, just under 20% are available online, and each institution offers them on their own portals. With [www.tramites.gub.uy](http://www.tramites.gub.uy), what we are doing is bringing them together in one place to provide the best service and make them easy to access.”<sup>5</sup>

It was not possible to identify actions for the Single Public Safety Window.

#### **Relevance**

It is difficult to estimate the relevance of the goals associated with this commitment given the heterogeneity and variety of their components. On one hand, it would seem essential to at least have centralized information in the Internet about the most commonly looked-up issues and procedures. However, this is insufficient and additional

steps must be taken, especially to determine the relevance of commitment to OGP values.

As originally written, the commitment shows no clear relevance to OGP values. When considering the new proposals, it is important to think about characteristics that would make it more relevant, such as:

- Being multi-service, meaning able to offer citizens the variety of services they need to meet a specific need at a single location;
- Being multi-channel, meaning not just allowing services and information to be available on the Internet and via mobile applications, but also taking care to provide in-person service as a channel that remains important for many citizens; and
- Being multi-coherent, meaning posing the need to achieve basic coherence among the different government institutions so there are common criteria for the information requested and procedural requirements.

### *Moving Forward*

We therefore recommend:

- Strengthening AGESIC's role as the agent responsible for monitoring and following up on processes. This means having a detailed and precise work plan for each objective, with up-to-date information about each goal's progress.
- Moving forward with a strategy of persuasion and training focused on the benefits that the new system will have for both citizens and institutions since one of the main difficulties appears to stem from problems in building consensus among the public institutions involved.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Virginia Pardo, AGESIC Digital Citizens' Area.

<sup>2</sup> Available at:

[http://www.agesic.gub.uy/innovaportal/v/2462/1/agesic/empresa\\_en\\_el\\_dia.html](http://www.agesic.gub.uy/innovaportal/v/2462/1/agesic/empresa_en_el_dia.html)

<sup>3</sup> See <http://vuce.gub.uy/procesos-vigentes/>

<sup>4</sup> See PEU Housing sub-home page, available at: <http://vivienda.gub.uy/>

<sup>5</sup> Press release from Diario La República. Available at: <http://bit.ly/1dSvMsw>

## 15. Uruguayan Government Portal (PEU)

### Commitment Text

Complete an organized guide of the Uruguayan government's procedures and information. The lead institution is AGESIC. In 2012, publicity campaigns targeting citizens were conducted using digital media, maintaining the strong commitment to maximize the use of the portal and continue increase its number of hits. The amount of available information will continue to increase by adding new pages on everything related to specific topics of interest. Tools for citizen participation will be included to encourage interaction with citizens. The Government Portal will be the point of access to the Open Data Catalogue of the country's government.

Commitment Description						
Answerability	Lead institution	AGESIC (Agency for Electronic Government and Information Society)				
	Supporting institutions	None specified				
	Point of contact specified?	No				
Specificity and Measurability		Low: Commitment language describes activity that is unclear, but can be construed as measurable with some interpretation on the part of the reader				
Relevance	OGP Grand Challenges	Improving public services, Increasing public integrity, More effectively managing public resources				
	Relevant OGP Values	Transparency	Citizen Participation	Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency and Accountability	None
		✓	✓		✓	
Ambition						
New or pre-existing? Pre-existing			Potential Impact Moderate: the commitment is a major step forward in the relevant public policy area, but remains limited in scale or scope			
Level of completion						
Start Date: 2010		End Date: Not specified		Actual completion		Substantial
				Projected completion		Complete
Next steps						
Further work on basic implementation						



### *What happened?*

One of the objectives (Objective 10) of the Uruguay Digital Agenda (ADU) 2008-2010 was to set up the Uruguayan Government Portal: “To develop and perfect the Government Portal, shaping it to be the main port of digital access to public administration offices and their services as well as an instrument of transparency and citizen participation.”<sup>1</sup> In 2010, work was done to design the Uruguayan Government Portal (PEU) ([portal.gub.uy](http://portal.gub.uy)) and, at the end of that year, a beta version was launched with contributions and suggestions from citizens. In March 2011, a final version was operational, and a series of actions were taken to improve it, complete its information and incorporate new functions.

In December 2011, at the start of the Plan implementation period, the PEU had some 56 secondary pages with the first mobile version of the portal and a survey-based citizen participation mechanism. Within this context, the commitment included in Plan 2012 was formulated, with the following actions:

- At the PEU interface level, improvements were made to meet AGESIC’s minimum requirements, and work was done to produce specific approaches on the portal to promote the issues of Personal Data Protection and Open Data.
- In terms of information completeness, the subpage [datos.gub.uy](http://datos.gub.uy) was enhanced and two new subpages were added, as was the possibility of accessing and interacting with the Uruguayan Government’s Open Data Catalogue ([datos.gub.uy](http://datos.gub.uy)).
- Communication and dissemination campaigns have been conducted using digital media, and presentations have been made at institutions to explain the services of the Portal and Search Engine ([buscador.gub.uy](http://buscador.gub.uy)) and the possibility of collaborating to improve how information is categorized. In late 2012, [buscador.gub.uy](http://buscador.gub.uy) was used as a search engine on 10 sites of the Uruguayan Government, and 7 portals from the Presidency section had been set up using the Uruguayan Government Portal infrastructure.<sup>2</sup>

Based on this work, the IRM researchers deemed this commitment to be substantially complete.

### *Relevance*

The Uruguayan Government Portal is a port of entry to all sites that provide content of value to citizens. The direct impact on citizens’ concerns the fact that the Portal has a varied and valuable set of profiles and thematic areas that organize the information and quickly redirect visitors to the government sites that have the information they seek.

According to the information contributed for this research, the site is very easy to use and users’ assessments were very positive, particularly for those concerning a specific issue and who find a secondary page on the Portal with broad information related to that specific issue.

The impact of using technology has been radical. While in the past many manual operations were carried out that produced little information, which was often out of date, by using technology, either to automatically acquire information or for the workflow for areas requiring human intervention, they now produce a significantly higher volume of information that is always up-to-date and automatically catalogued. The result is that navigation and searches are far simpler and more efficient.

The search engine maximizes and improves customized searches within the Government’s domain, thereby ensuring that the user can quickly and easily access the required information. By knowing what citizens most often search for, it is possible to

organize, catalogue, order and improve access to said information, thereby giving priority to what the citizen wants to find, rather than what the Government wishes to show.

It is also very interesting to observe that, two years after the mobile version of the Uruguayan Government Portal was produced (December 2011), visits made from mobile devices to its home page and the subpage for job postings and invitations to tender made them among are 10 pages most visited on the entire site. The first year it was launched, only 1% of Portal hits were made using these devices, while in the first half of 2013, this percentage rose to 10%.<sup>3</sup>

### *Moving Forward*

We recommend continuing to work on this commitment's three lines of action:

1. Enhancing the completeness of information.
2. Disseminating information about the Portal more widely.
3. Improving mechanisms for participation.

Firstly, it is a priority for the Portal to offer information on 100% of government procedures. This requires an initial effort to precisely identify all procedures if one wishes to have a measure for evaluating the degree to which this goal has been met.

Immediate and effective action must also be taken to counteract citizens' profound lack of awareness of the Portal. The few dissemination campaigns conducted over digital media in 2001 demonstrated their positive impact on the number of visits to the Portal.

Finally, we also recommend setting up new forms of citizen participation and interaction so that they can easily express their opinions on the Portal, the lack of information about a particular procedure or any other matter of interest. Although there is currently a form that allows citizens to report whether they did not find a certain procedure, new forms of participation must be set up to make it possible to know what citizens need in more detail.

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<sup>1</sup> ADU document 2008-2010: <http://bit.ly/18btAtx>

<sup>2</sup> Information provided by Sandra Sayanes, Manager of the Uruguayan Government Portal, in an interview conducted on 3 October 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Document titled "Portal y Buscador del Uruguayan Government, una nueva puerta de acceso a la información" prepared by AGESIC. September 2013.

## 16. System for Processing Ordinary Passports at Uruguayan Consular Offices

### Commitment Text

The initial plan is to cover 50% of the consular system by the end of 2012 and then continue with progressive implementation. The institutions involved are the Liaison and Consular Affairs Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in conjunction with the Ministry of the Interior and AGESIC.

Commitment Description						
Availability	Lead institution	Liaison and Consular Affairs Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRREE)				
	Supporting institutions	AGESIC (Agency for Electronic Government and Information Society) and Ministry of the Interior				
	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	Improving public services, Increasing public integrity, More effectively managing public resources, Creating safer communities				
	Relevant OGP Values	Transparency	Citizen Participation	Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency and Accountability	None
						✓
Ambition						
New or pre-existing?			Potential Impact			
New			Minor: The commitment is an incremental but positive step in the relevant policy area			
Level of completion						
Start Date:		End Date:		Actual completion		Substantial
Unspecified		Late 2012		Projected completion		Complete
Next steps						
None: Abandon the commitment						

### What happened?

Up until 2012, applying for passports abroad required manually sending fingerprints and did not comply with international security standards. Beginning in that year, a software application that facilitates the sending of documentation electronically without the need to send it by diplomatic pouch was coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior (MI) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRREE). This shortens the time required to obtain a passport. However, once a passport has been issued by the National Bureau of

Civil Identification, it is still sent to the corresponding consulate in a diplomatic pouch. To fulfill this commitment, there must be better coordination between Ministry of the Interior (specifically the National Bureau of Civil Identification) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (the Liaison and Consular Affairs Office).<sup>1</sup>

In 2012, the goal was met for this new system to begin working in 14 general consulates. Although the commitment only referred to ordinary passports when issuing emergency passports (a new type of travel document being developed to replace the "válido de viaje por una única vez" [valid for one-time travel] document), the MRREE is also working with the Technical Police to have online information about citizens' criminal histories.

#### *Relevance*

Unlike most of the commitments incorporated into the Plan, this was one of the few that originated in institutions outside AGESIC. In terms of its relevance, fulfilling the commitment has made it possible to shorten times and reduce costs for citizens obtaining passports, although it cannot be classified as a substantial transformation or significantly related to OGP values.

#### *Moving Forward*

Since this commitment does not constitute a contribution relevant to OPG values, it is suggested that it not be included in subsequent plans.

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<sup>1</sup> Information provided by Hugo Caussade, of the MRREE Liaison and Consular Affairs Department, in an interview conducted on 30 October 2013.

## 17. Apostille Convention

### Commitment Text

*In 2011, Law No. 18,836 was enacted, authorizing Uruguay to enter the so-called "Apostille" system, which eliminates the requirement for consular and diplomatic authentication for official documents originating in a country that is a member of the Hague Convention that are to be used in another such country. In October 2012, the system will be operational in Uruguay, thereby sensibly simplifying the international exchange of documents, benefiting Uruguayan citizens abroad in validating official instruments abroad as well as those documents originating in other countries so that may have legal effect in Uruguay.*

Commitment Description						
Answerability	Lead institution	Liaison and Consular Affairs Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRREE)				
	Supporting institutions	No				
	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	Improving public services, More effectively managing public resources				
	Relevant OGP Values	Transparency	Citizen Participation	Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency and Accountability	None
						✓
Ambition						
New or pre-existing?			Potential Impact			
New			Minor: The commitment is an incremental but positive step in the relevant policy area			
Level of completion						
Start Date:		End Date:		Actual completion		Complete
2012		October 2012		Projected completion		Complete
Next steps						
None: Abandon the commitment						

### What happened?

The apostille system has been fully operational since October 2012 and, thus, this goal has been achieved. In October 2012, the MRREE launched the apostille application as a way to streamline procedures. Since that date, those wishing to authenticate a

notoriously-recorded document of Uruguayan origin to be used in another country have had to apply for an apostille from the MRREE, which will verify the origin and, as appropriate, certify the document. Likewise, since October 2012, apostilles from countries signing the Convention are automatically recognized for procedures in Uruguay. Official documents from countries that have not signed the Convention must follow the customary procedures.

The process of implementing the apostille system required interinstitutional agreements and the creation of a working group that reported on the mechanism and benefits of the apostille. Support also came from Spanish technicians who trained Uruguayan government employees in how to use the new tool.

### *Relevance*

Implementation of this convention allows Uruguayans residing abroad to save time and money when validating procedures in the countries where they live, and also benefits foreign nationals who need to conduct proceedings in Uruguay. The convention includes all public procedures, such as notarial instruments, international letters rogatory, university diplomas, court-issued certificates of criminal background checks, birth and death certificates, human and animal health certificates.

Given the structural flow of migration from Uruguay, this commitment is deemed relevant, especially bearing in mind that the principal destination countries are members of the Apostille Convention (it is worth mentioning that 150,000 Uruguayans live in Argentina, 80,000 live in Spain, and 57,000 live in the United States and that the three countries are signatories of said convention).<sup>1</sup> According to Lourdes Boné, Director of the MRREE Liaison and Consular Affairs Department, Uruguay's signing of the Apostille Convention on 14 October 2012 marked a political milestone because it entailed a change of approach in consular management which henceforth considered the citizen as being central to the services it provides. "The approach to tax collection changed due to an approach based on rights and services."<sup>2</sup> However, as described, the relevance of this commitment to OGP values is not evident.

### *Moving Forward*

Since this commitment is not a contribution that is clearly relevant to OGP values, it is suggested that it not be included in subsequent plans.

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<sup>1</sup> Statements of Jorge Muñio, Assistant Director of Consular Affairs of the Communications Secretariat of the Uruguayan Presidency, 12 October 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Statements of Lourdes Boné, Director of Consular Affairs of the Communications Secretariat of the Uruguayan Presidency, 15 October 2013.

## 18. Electronic Tax Supporting Documentation

### Commitment Text

New system documenting operations using electronic tax supporting documentation (CFE). Makes it possible to replace paper documentation with electronic documentation. A CFE is a digital document that has been generated and signed electronically and that has the same validity for legal and tax purposes as a bill and other paper documents. Institutions involved are: the Ministry of Economy and Finance and the Internal Revenue Service. In 2014, electronic bills and tickets are expected to be available for all domestic companies.

Commitment Description						
A n s w e r a b i l i t y	Lead institution	Ministry of Economy and Finance and Internal Revenue Service				
	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				
R e l e v a n c e	OGP Grand Challenges	Improving public services, Increasing public integrity, More effectively managing public resources, Increasing corporate accountability				
	Relevant OGP Values	Transparency	Citizen Participation	Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency and Accountability	None
		✓		✓	✓	
Ambition						
New or 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:		End Date:		Actual completion		Substantial
20 August 2012		2014		Projected completion		Complete
Next steps						
Further work on basic implementation						

### What happened?

In November 2011, the DGI launched the CFE project, thereby completing this commitment. Since that date, the website [www.efactura.dgi.gub.uy](http://www.efactura.dgi.gub.uy) has also been available, which contains information of interest to taxpayers.

To provide a regulatory framework for the CFE system, in early 2012 Decree 36/012 and DGI Resolution 798/012 were issued.<sup>1</sup> These legal provisions allowed, on 20 August 2012, the DGI and a supermarket to conduct the first electronic transaction in the CFE system. This objective was reached due to the joint efforts of the DGI and the companies in the Pilot Plan that supported this process.

The CFE system includes e-bills that document the transactions between taxpayers and e-tickets that document transactions with end users. Both have their corresponding credit and debit memoranda. In turn, the system includes e-remittance slips that document the physical movement of goods and the e-receipts that document the taxes withheld and collected by taxpayers in charge of doing so.<sup>2</sup>

In October 2013, the system was in operation at 40 companies that issued more than 80,000,000 electronic documents. In addition, more than 300 companies are in the process of testing and certification to enter the system.<sup>3</sup>

### **Relevance**

The Electronic Tax Voucher system generates benefits for all parties involved by, first, contributing towards the entire society benefiting from greater environmental protection and, secondly, by giving companies a considerable reduction in their operating costs. In addition, the system substantially improves the quality, quantity and timeliness of information received by the tax authority, which allows it to perfect control of taxpayer compliance. This system also makes it possible to better control tax evasion, thus reducing the levels of informal status, which helps create a framework of fair competition that is transparent to taxpayers.<sup>4</sup>

### **Moving Forward**

Since, to date, the large-scale taxpayers are mainly the ones using the CFE mechanism, we recommend directing new efforts towards including small- and medium-sized companies in the system. These are precisely the companies that can benefit more, despite the fact that the system entails a great challenge.

It is also necessary to mention that one of the people interviewed asked about the great ambition to reach “all domestic companies.” In view of this challenge, as IRM researchers, we do not recommend adjusting the goal downwards, but instead to continue making progress to the extent possible.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at <http://bit.ly/18Fr7YV> y <http://bit.ly/19jxUBU>

<sup>2</sup> Lucía Saint Martin, “El sistema de facturación electrónica,” *Diario El País*, Economía & Mercado supplement, <http://bit.ly/1bhLOZF>

<sup>3</sup> Information contributed by Matías Dodel in an interview conducted on 22 October 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Letter from DGI director, Mr. Pablo Ferreri (accountant), published on the website <http://bit.ly/1bKel6g>



## V. SELF-ASSESSMENT

*The Self-assessment Report was presented within the stipulated time frame, but was not made available for consideration by the public or civil society organizations as planned.*

Since the Report was not made available to any of the stakeholders, it does not contain opinions other than those of the government body that wrote it: AGESIC. The Report presents the level to which all commitments have been fulfilled using percentages. Some commitments show insufficient evidence of completion while, for others, information on progress is referred to as scant. For example, the commitment on citizen e-participation mentions that research was carried out that was used as a basis for deciding not to move forward in creating an Electronic Platform for Citizen Participation; however, the contents of this research are not explained nor are the reasons given that lead to this decision.

**Table 2: Self-Assessment Checklist**

Was annual self-assessment report published??	Yes
Was the report published according to pre-established schedule?	Yes
Is the report available in the local language?	Yes
According to stakeholders, was publication in said language(s) adequate?	Yes
Is the report available in English?	Yes
Did the government provide a two-week public comment period on draft self-assessment reports?	No
Were any comments received?	N/A
Is the report deposited in the OGP portal?	Yes
Did the self-assessment report include review of the consultation efforts?	No
Did the report cover all of the commitments?	Yes
Did it assess completion according to the schedule for the commitment?	Yes
Did the report reaffirm responsibility for government openness?	Yes
Does the report describe the relationship of the action plan with grand challenge areas?	Yes

## 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.

### Uruguayan Context

Uruguay has taken important steps in recent years to enhance access to public information, transparency and accountability, even though all sectors recognize the need to protect what has been achieved and keep moving forward. Advances have taken the form of important progress in designing regulatory frameworks, adapting institutional forms, creating institutions and developing initiatives that promote, from civil society, the transparency of the public sector and the accountability of the CSOs themselves.

In terms of transparency, Law No. 17,060—known as the Anticorruption Act— was passed in 1998. It arose from the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption (IACAC), passed by the Organization of American States (OAS) in 1996. Although it has received criticism, this law began to fill a huge legislative void and fulfill international legal obligations undertaken by the Uruguayan Government. Law No. 17,060 introduced important changes that have slowly been institutionalized, such as the Government Economic and Financial Advisory Board (Junta Asesora en Materia Económica Financiera del Estado), the current Board of Transparency and Public Ethics (Junta de Transparencia and Ética Pública; JUTEP) and the first organization specializing in preventing, monitoring and advising on corruption.

In 2008, a new access to public information law was passed: Law No. 18,381. This law contains fundamental provisions for incipient institutionalization with regard to transparency and access to public information. In effect, it creates a Public Information Access Unit (UAIP), under AGESIC, whose mission is to implement public policies on transparency and access to information. Without a doubt, the CSOs played an important role in the legislative progress made while also performing an important function in social control. For example, it was a coalition of social organizations, the Archives and Access to Public Information Group (Grupo Archivos y Acceso a la Información Pública; GAIP), that promoted Law No. 18,381. In July 2013, a movement of authors creative in different areas of culture, students and CSOs, caused the repeal of Article 218 of the Law on Accountability, an article that had changed the Copyright Law.<sup>1</sup> Several CSOs also mobilized to counteract the amendment of Law No. 18,381 that allowed organizations to declare the confidentiality of information related to control, evaluation and monitoring during processes prior to any government decision-making. Another group of organizations recently mobilized to express its opinions on the open government process in Uruguay.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, the CSOs in Uruguay have also begun working on aspects related to their own transparency and accountability. In response to a call from the Regional Accountability Initiative (Initiative Regional Rendir Cuentas) regarding a hundred organizations in Uruguay, recent year three collective accountability reports have been presented<sup>3</sup> on their activities, human and financial resources, the sources of their funds and networks of contacts, among other information.

### Stakeholder Priorities

To evaluate Uruguay's Open Government Action Plan 2012 using a methodology in keeping with OGP guidelines<sup>4</sup>—based on a combination of interviews of various stakeholders, discussion groups, consultations, an online survey and desk-based

analysis and review—the IRM team was able to involve a broad range of stakeholders. Thus, in-person consultations were held with CSOs in the form of a discussion-based focus group, and an online survey<sup>5</sup> was conducted that was answered by a wide range of representatives of civil society, the academic sector, central and local governments, journalists, etc.

These two sources of information show that the commitments considered most relevant are those related to “access to public information” and “enhancing the culture of transparency.” In the online survey, for example, these commitments were considered the most relevant by 80% and 64% of those responding, respectively. Civil society representatives considered that the most relevant commitments were those directly related to the right to citizen participation, the establishment of mechanisms and tools that facilitate transparency and provide the guarantees necessary to access and use information for the benefit of citizens.

Coinciding with the position of civil society stakeholders, government leaders of the Open Government Plan give priority to commitments related to access to public information and transparency since “these have direct value for citizens from a human rights perspective.”<sup>6</sup> They also emphasize those commitments “that are called upon to make public management transparent, such as the Government Procurement System (Sistema de Compras Estatales; SICE) or the system for filling government jobs (Uruguay Concursa).”<sup>7</sup> The value of these commitments lies in the fact that they create institutionality and mark a different way of working beyond the technological aspect. Finally, government leaders emphasize those commitments related to participation, particularly mentioning e-participation projects, since these make it possible to listen to the public and, on this basis, take actions.

These trends appeared again when stakeholders were asked which commitments and actions should be included in a new Open Government Plan. Both the online survey and in-person consultations show that the priority is on actions related to “transparency and accountability,” “access to public information,” “citizen service and response to requests,” and “citizen participation.” In terms of access to public information, respondents specifically demanded actions related to the compliance with, implementation of and amendments to Law 18,381. In relation to open data, the demand focuses on the need to make progress in setting standards and empowering the working group created for this purpose. In terms of participation, stakeholders assert the need to make progress in approving a legal framework that affords guarantees and promotes mechanisms for citizen participation and monitoring of public management.

## Recommendations

Based on the information and opinions gathered from numerous speakers during this assessment process, we are making a series of recommendations focused on improving how future Open Government plans are formulated and implemented.

### 1) Formulation of the OGP Plan

Establish more precise, measurable and verifiable goals. In setting these goals, it is important that each goal is formulated with a specific indicator, a clear timeline and the identity of the person or entity responsible for documenting results obtained. Goals for several of the commitments were formulated in a way that made it difficult to clearly determine whether or not they had been reached and, if so, to what degree.

Ensure that the final balance of commitments included in the Plan covers the OGP values. Since most of the commitments included in the Open Government Plan were taken from pre-existing agendas (e.g., Digital Agenda) or arose from earlier conceptual frameworks (e.g., Electronic Government), Plan 2012 was heavily biased towards issues of electronic government, to the detriment of commitments aimed at foundations for

public integrity, participation and citizen collaboration. This failing must be remedied in the new plan.

Adopt a more strategic point of view for the second plan. The logic behind Plan 2012 being put together based on projects primarily proposed by government entities resulted in the commitments being fragmented, depriving actions of a global perspective and efficacy. The Working Group responsible for the Plan must establish emphases and promote actions in areas considered priority, especially by citizens. Otherwise, the plan will tend to reproduce those actions defined as priority in other agendas and other plans, which are not necessarily those most relevant to Open Government values.

Ensure balance between the originating institutions and those that are responsible for the commitments included in the plan. The large majority of these institutions were proposed by AGESIC with few exceptions, such as the proposals made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Economy and Finance. This situation created a certain sense of “disengagement” in the public sector bodies in relation to the Open Government agenda, which tended to be perceived as lying strictly within the domain of AGESIC. This “disengagement” resulted in low levels of commitment and sense of ownership towards the open government agenda from many government agencies.

## **2) Mechanisms for Participation, Consultation and Monitoring of the Plan**

Use media to inform citizens about open government initiatives and the opportunities for participation. The public consultation held on Plan 2012 was circumscribed in terms of time (just 15 days), and publicity was limited to the invitation to the consultation being posted on the institutional website of AGESIC and some e-mails being sent out. Just 1 out of 10 people surveyed stated that they knew about this civil society consultation.<sup>8</sup>

Work on a plan dissemination and presentation strategy aimed at the various stakeholders. It is telling that, of the 62 points of contact consulted in the online survey, more than two thirds (68%) were completely unaware of the plan contents. Given the number of stakeholders involved, it is important to have a dissemination strategy accompanying the plan in order to achieve the desired results. The parties involved should include presenting the plan to universities and academic centers, journalists, chambers of commerce (especially in the software industry), NGOs and associations associated with the issues of transparency, public access to information and human rights as well as free software communities, among others.

Create thematic positions for the inclusion of civil society on the working team. It is obviously necessary to define clear rules on the means of appointing these representatives, their decision-making authority in preparing the plan, and their role during the implementation and monitoring phase. Given the complexity and variety of open government issues, the existence of specific thematic positions would make it possible to more closely and specifically monitor each issue.

Maintain forums for monitoring and follow-up of actions and achievement of goals. This may be the working group or a similar forum. However, the existence of an ongoing forum to follow up on the plan is essential in that it would provide: a) greater coordination and synergy among those responsible for the different commitments, b) updated information on the status of each goal, and c) continuous feedback from civil society representatives regarding the progress of commitments undertaken.

Create a broad platform of institutions associated with the issues of open government. In addition to formal representation of CSOs on the working team, such a platform would provide an opportunity to join forces, coordinate actions and enhance civil society participation in designing, implementing and monitoring the plan. In the public sector, the consolidation of an alliance of organizations, far from being seen as a threat,

should be considered a complement to government action, although such a situation would not be free of conflict.

### **3) Plan Contents**

Access to Public Information: include specific goals to improve the implementation of Law 18,381 in aspects like ensuring or monitoring for compliance; strictly observing time periods and procedures; controlling the classification of information; disseminating and consolidating UAIP's competencies to receive reports and complaints from citizens and, in general, establishing mechanisms for consultation, advisory assistance and legal assistance so that people can exercise their rights. Specific actions should also be included to allow improvements in the institutional design of the entity of control, including an amendment to the law when difficulties have been found.

Citizen Participation: include ambitious goals that promote more participative governance. In this respect, it is necessary to have a legal framework that affords guarantees to citizens and to incorporate mechanisms for participation in the different aspects of public management. It is also important to include a citizen perspective when formulating and implementing some commitments, as in the case of the GRP or the electronic file. In both cases, it has not been possible to translate, in an equally effective manner, the achievements and advances to benefits for citizens.

Transparency and Open Data: strengthen the work being done by the Open Data Group (Open Data Group), which has achieved excellent dialogue and the participation of various units and organizations as well as academic institutions. This opportunity has served to advance the agenda and needs to be empowered and formalized. For some, this initiative constitutes, in a real sense, the best practice that the Government of Uruguay has in the matter, and lessons learned may be transferrable to other aspects of Open Government.

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.juntemosfirmas.org/petitorio-Eliminar-el-articulo-218-de-la-Rendicion-de-Cuentas--ejercicio-2012-236> and <http://derechoalacultura.org/2013/07/17/chau-218-hola-debate/>

<sup>2</sup> See <http://bit.ly/18o0GRF> y <http://bit.ly/1eSUntl>

<sup>3</sup> See Uruguay Fiscal Years 2010, 2011 and 2012 at [www.rendircuentas.org](http://www.rendircuentas.org)

<sup>4</sup> See Section VI, Annex on Methodology, of this report.

<sup>5</sup> See details on both techniques in Section VI, Annex on Methodology, of this report.

<sup>6</sup> Opinions expressed by Virginia Pardo, Director of the AGESIC Digital Citizens' Area.

<sup>7</sup> Opinions expressed by Virginia Pardo, Director of the AGESIC Digital Citizens' Area.

<sup>8</sup> Online survey conducted within the framework of this research. See Section VI, Annex on Methodology, of this report.

## ANNEX: METHODOLOGY

*As a complement to the government self-assessment, researchers from the OGP participating country prepare an independent report. These experts use a common methodology that follows OGP guidelines based on a combination of interviews with local OGP stakeholders and desk-based analysis.*

### Introduction

The OGP action plan progress report is based on a combination of interviews and analysis of documents and information obtained from non-governmental stakeholder meetings. The report builds on the findings of the Government's own self-assessment and other assessments of progress put out by civil society or international organizations.

Local researchers met with stakeholders to ensure an accurate portrayal of OGP process events. Given budgetary and calendar constraints, IRM researchers cannot consult all affected and/or interested parties. Consequently, IRM researchers strive for methodological transparency and, whenever possible, publicize the process of stakeholder engagement. This process is detailed later in this section. In those national contexts where anonymity of informants—governmental or non-governmental—is required, IRM researchers protect the anonymity of informants.

This report was reviewed by an international panel of experts to certify that it meets the highest research standards. Additionally, the IRM strongly encourages public commentary on public drafts of national documents.

### Interviews Conducted

In-person, meetings were held in depth with persons responsible for the Plan as well as those responsible for each commitment as well as other stakeholders. Interviews were conducted between 3 and 30 October 2013 and, in some cases, several interviews with the same person were required, due to the amount of information to be gathered.

We wish to thank the following people for the contributions to the report and in the interviews:

- Virginia Pardo, Digital Citizens' Area, AGESIC (four interviews)
- Victoria Koster, Digital Citizens' Area, AGESIC (two interviews)
- Alicia Alonso, Government Procurement Agency
- Javier Barreiro, Technology Area, AGESIC
- Juan Bertón, Digital Citizens' Area, AGESIC
- Guilherme Canela, UNESCO – Open Government Technical Advisory Committee
- Hugo Caussade, Liaison and Consular Affairs Department, MRREE
- Matías Dodel, Agency for Electronic Government and Information Society, AGESIC
- Alexandra Fernández, Project Management Area, ONSC
- Mariana Gatti, Support Services Area, AGESIC
- Marcelo Guinovart, Organizations and Processes Area, AGESIC
- Karime Ruibal, Organizations and Processes Area, AGESIC
- Sandra Sayanes, Digital Citizens' Area, AGESIC

- Gustavo Suárez, Digital Citizens' Area, AGESIC

#### Meeting #1: 17 October 2013

ICD organized a discussion group for CSO members related to the issue of open government. The agenda for this meeting included the following topics:

- Participant profiles and their association with the open government agenda
- Perception of the process of preparing the Government Plan 2012
- Participation in preparing and implementing the Plan
- Assessment of commitments included in the Plan
- Recommendations on preparing the new Plan
- Analysis of civil society's role in the open government agenda

The following people participated in this group:

- Edison Lanza, CAinfo
- Mariana Más, DATA / CAinfo
- Álvaro Rettich, Center for Free Software Studies (Centro de Estudios de Software Libre; CESoL)
- Rodrigo Barbano, CESOL / Wikimedia Uruguay / Creative Commons Uruguay

Those who could not participate in this event were sent a self-administered questionnaire covering the topics discussed in the group. The following people responded to this questionnaire:

- Tania Da Rosa, CAinfo
- Fabrizio Scrollini, DATA
- Pedro Cribari, Uruguay Transparente

#### Meeting #2: 18 October 2013

In addition to the event organized by the IRM team, researchers participated in an activity organized by the organizations DATA and CAinfo to encourage civil society to participate in designing and implementing the next Action Plan. Six civil society organizations participated in that event.

#### Online survey

To learn the views of other stakeholders, not necessarily directly related to open government issues, an online survey was conducted. The main aim was to gather information about the level of awareness about Uruguay's open government proposal, the level of participation, the relevance given to issues included in the Plan and opinions and suggestions concerning topics that could be included in a future plan. The survey was online from 19 to 25 October.<sup>1</sup> It was sent to indicators of public opinion, members of CSOs, academic institutions and international organizations, among others. Eighty-five completed surveys were received, which can be characterized according to the organizational affiliation of the respondent:

- Civil society: 32%
- Academia: 19%
- Media: 8%
- National government: 8%
- Departmental government: 7%

- Corporations: 7%
- Miscellaneous: 19%

The survey corroborates general perception regarding the need to more widely disseminate the Plan and its objectives. Seventy-three percent of survey respondents were not aware of the Plan, and 94% did not in any way participate in designing or implementing it.

#### About the Independent Reporting Mechanism

The IRM is a key means by which government, civil society and the private sector can track (on a biannual basis) government development and implementation of national OGP action plans on a bi-annual basis. An International Experts' Panel designs research methodology and ensures quality control of such reports. The panel comprises 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 coordination with local researchers. Questions and comments about this report can be directed to the staff at [irm@opengovpartnership.org](mailto:irm@opengovpartnership.org)

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<sup>1</sup> See survey questionnaire at <http://svy.mk/1b28Tke>

A PDF of the survey PDF is available at <http://bit.ly/18JhCT>