

Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) Progress Report 2014-2015: Lithuania

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Executive Summary: Lithuania

Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) Progress Report 2014-2015

The Lithuanian action plan covered a variety of topics, ranging from improving public participation to increasing accountability in the health sector. Implementation was negatively affected by a lack of measurable activities and targets. Moving forward, the content of the action plan would benefit from more specificity and meaningful collaboration with civil society.

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

The Office of the Government coordinates OGP activities in Lithuania. This agency has legal powers to enforce policy changes on other agencies. In February 2014, it initiated a working group comprised of representatives from various government agencies. The working group is responsible for development, implementation and monitoring of the action plan.

Lithuania's second action plan is one of the strategic documents in the country's 2030 Strategy, a report outlining the state vision until 2030.

OGP PROCESS

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

The Office of the Government included a wide range of stakeholders in the development of the second action plan. However, due to a lack of awareness of OGP by participants, the consultations were very general and failed to provide stakeholders with opportunities to shape the content of the action plan.

The Government did not establish a multi-stakeholder forum to oversee implementation of the action plan. It did, however, organise a one-off event to receive feedback on implementation. The event discussed broad open government issues but did not address implementation of specific commitments.

The government's self-assessment report was prepared and released on time. The government did not provide the OGP-mandated two-week comment period on the document nor did it release it in Lithuanian. The lack of availability of the document in Lithuanian means only English speakers were able to monitor implementation.

At a glance

Member since: 2011
Number of commitments: 8

Level of Completion:

Completed: 0 of 8
Substantial: 2 of 8
Limited: 6 of 8
Not started: 0 of 8
Unclear: 0 of 8

Timing:

On schedule: 5 of 8

Commitment Emphasis:

Access to information: 4 of 8
Civic participation: 2 of 8
Accountability: 2 of 8
Tech & innovation for transparency & accountability: 1 of 8

Number of Commitments that Were:

Clearly relevant to an OGP value: 5 of 8
Of transformative potential impact: 0 of 8
Substantially or completely implemented: 2 of 8
All three (★): 0 of 8

COMMITMENT IMPLEMENTATION

As part of OGP, countries are required to make commitments in a two-year action plan. The Lithuania action plan contains 14 “actions” in six broad areas. The IRM researcher combined some of these actions, resulting in eight commitments assessed. The following tables summarise each commitment, including its level of completion, potential impact, whether it falls within Lithuania’s planned schedule, and the key next steps for the commitment in future OGP action plans. Several of the commitments are phrased in vague terms and lack tangible milestones, making their level of ambition and completion difficult to assess.

The IRM methodology includes starred commitments. These commitments are measurable, are clearly relevant to OGP values as written, have transformative potential impact, and are substantially or completely implemented. Note that the IRM updated the star criteria in early 2015 to raise the bar for model OGP commitments. In addition to the criteria listed above, the old criteria included commitments that had moderate potential impact. Due to challenges with ambition and lack of specificity, Lithuania did not receive any starred commitments. See <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/node/5919> for more information.

Table 1: Assessment of Progress by Commitment

COMMITMENT SHORT NAME	POTENTIAL IMPACT				LEVEL OF COMPLETION				TIMING
	NONE	MINOR	MODERATE	TRANSFORMATIVE	NOT STARTED	LIMITED	SUBSTANTIAL	COMPLETE	
1. Public services quality improvements.									Behind schedule
1.1. Public and administrative services catalogue: inventory and catalogue services administered and create a methodology to measure their functionality.									Behind
1.2. Quality of service monitoring: assess the appropriateness of services rendered; create quality performance criteria for institutions; develop methodology to measure user satisfaction; research the activity of public administration.									On schedule
1.3. Develop service quality standards: develop and publicise minimum quality standards; prepare citizen charter recommendations; develop standards for the provision of public services.									On
2. Developing and promoting e-services.									On
2.1. Online service dissemination: enhance people’s capacity to use e-services: reduce digital exclusion.									On
2.2. Increase services on e-Government Gateway: bring public services online: develop and implement electronic solutions; increase quality of life and productivity by using ICT.									On

COMMITMENT SHORT NAME	POTENTIAL IMPACT				LEVEL OF COMPLETION				TIMING
	NONE	MINOR	MODERATE	TRANSFORMATIVE	NOT STARTED	LIMITED	SUBSTANTIAL	COMPLETE	
3. Encouraging public participation.									On
3.1. Facilitate public involvement: approve legal regulation of public consultation; make proposals public; enhance public involvement at the school level; ensure involvement of the public in the workings of institutions: set up the Council of Nongovernmental Organisations.									On
3.2. Measure promoting involvement: implement 90% of activities approved by the Local Community Council; enhance capacity of people and community organisations to participate in public administration processes.									On
3.3. Encourage participation in local decision making: develop a publication providing information about the rights and participation opportunities for local people.									On
4. Raising civic awareness.									On
4.1a. Civic education update.									On
4.1b. Implement civil education project.									On
5. National Civil Society Fund model development: discuss models with social partners: present final version to the Government Strategic Committee.									Behind
6. Accessibility of public information.									Behind
6.1. Develop an open data supply model: develop open data concept guidelines for public administration authorities; present alternative ways for opening data.									Behind
6.2. Open format: develop recommendations for public institutions to prepare investment projects aimed at creating information systems.									Behind
7. Public decision-making transparency.									On
7.1. Publicise draft legislation.									On
7.2. Lower administrative burden: Reorganisation of the system of the authorities overseeing economic operators has reduced preconditions for corruption as a result of lower administrative and supervisory burden.									On
7.3. Reduce illegal payments in healthcare.									On
7.4. Improve service provision procedures: by increasing the effectiveness of public services.									On
7.5. Training of legislative drafters: on evaluation of anti-corruption draft legislation.									On
8. Promoting anti-corruption education.									On
8.1 Develop anti-corruption education programmes.									On
8.2 “clean hands” initiative: carry-out initiative across health institutions.									On

Table 2: Summary of Progress by Commitment

NAME OF COMMITMENT	SUMMARY
<p>1. Public services quality improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OGP value relevance: Unclear • Potential impact: Minor • Completion: Limited 	<p>This commitment aims to create an inventory of all administrative e-services and to set standards to evaluate the quality of service delivery. The Ministry of Interior (MoI) developed an online service catalogue listing more than 9,000 services. The MoI has prepared a draft of service standards recommendations, but it is unclear when the MoI will publish this document. The MoI coordinated initiatives across all ministries regarding service evaluation and improvement. It did not develop methodological recommendations for measuring user satisfaction. This commitment focuses only on service delivery, making its relevance to OGP values unclear. Stakeholders view this commitment as a positive step, as an inventory of public services does not currently exist. The MoI could make the commitment more relevant by releasing information about service quality standards to the public.</p>
<p>2. Developing and promoting e-services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OGP value relevance: Unclear • Potential impact: Minor • Completion: Limited 	<p>This commitment aims to increase online provisions of public and administrative services and to promote their wider public usage. The Information Society Development Committee (ISDC) created a portal to expand the use of e-services and to promote e-services via a media campaign. Progress has been limited as the outreach of these initiatives was not clearly traceable and falls short of the government's target in terms of user uptake, and according to stakeholders key elements in improving users uptake of e-services are public awareness and outreach. As worded, it is unclear how this commitment would provide open government. Moving forward, government could focus on developing efficiency and user-satisfaction indicators to assess the performance of e-services.</p>
<p>3. Encouraging public participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OGP value relevance: Clear • Potential impact: Minor • Completion: Substantial 	<p>The commitment aims to engage the public in decision making at the national and local level. The commitment is vaguely worded with no specific targets. The government established the NGO council with the aim of ensuring participation in NGO development policy. MoI developed an informational booklet for local community representatives focusing on key aspects of local governance. However, these steps resulted in only a small number of public consultations. A stakeholder noted that efforts to include national and municipal institutions in decision making remain fragmented. Moving forward, government should enhance consultation with high transparency standards.</p>
<p>4. Raising civic awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OGP value relevance: Unclear • Potential impact: Minor • Completion: Limited 	<p>The vague wording of this commitment makes it difficult to assess what it is supposed to achieve. The Ministry of Education reported updating the Lithuanian language programme curriculum for primary and secondary schools and developing teaching modules on shaping youth civil and national consciousness. It is unclear how these activities are related to OGP values. While a number of teachers interviewed welcomed these efforts, they mentioned their need for resources to implement the new teaching materials. This commitment's relevance could be improved by focusing on rights and duties of Lithuanian citizens to participate in electoral processes and participatory democracy.</p>
<p>5. National Civil Society Fund model development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OGP value relevance: Clear • Potential impact: Minor • Completion: Limited 	<p>This commitment aims to develop a model for the National Civil Society Fund to distribute government funding to Lithuanian NGOs. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour conducted an analysis of good practices in other countries and developed two alternatives of the Fund model. While the fund's creation is a welcome step forward in ensuring NGO sustainability, the government should include capacity building of the sector moving forward. It should also work towards publicly releasing all information related to the creation of the fund.</p>
<p>6. Accessibility of public information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OGP value relevance: Clear • Potential impact: Minor • Completion: Limited 	<p>This commitment aims to make public information available in an open data format. There is currently no open data portal in Lithuania. The Information Society Development Committee (ISDC) commissioned a feasibility study presenting two alternative open data supply models. The Ministry of Communications did not start implementation of the commitment. This commitment is only a prerequisite for further provisions of open data and represents a small step forward in opening data in the country. The IRM researcher recommends that the government follows the recommendations set out in the feasibility study.</p>
<p>7. Public decision-making transparency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OGP value relevance: Clear • Potential impact: Minor • Completion: Limited 	<p>This commitment aims to increase transparency in the public decision-making processes. The language of the commitment is vague, which makes it difficult to assess the potential impact of government efforts. While all draft laws since 1990 are now available online, the database does not allow public input. The Ministry of Health has introduced a code of ethics for healthcare institutions and has conducted anti-corruption trainings. Despite these positive developments, training of legislative drafters has not started. Stakeholders view the legislative database as a step in the right direction, but it still fails to explain how citizens can contribute to lawmaking. Moving forward, commitments should include clear activities for meaningful involvement of citizens in legislative processes using ICT solutions.</p>
<p>8. Promoting anti-corruption education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OGP value relevance: Clear • Potential impact: Minor • Completion: Substantial 	<p>This commitment promotes anti-corruption education through the use of media. The Special Investigation Service has developed anti-corruption education programmes and has organised anti-corruption courses in all municipal institutions. The Ministry of Health, however, has reportedly conducted the Clean Hands initiative in only a few healthcare institutions. - Stakeholders see the Clean Hands initiative as a positive development but decry its limited scope. Moving forward, anti-corruption commitments should focus on strengthening the integrity of public procurement systems and ensuring the transparency of lobbying activities.</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Most of the commitments in the Lithuanian action plan are worded vaguely and lack measurable milestones, making their relevance to OGP values difficult to assess. The creation of the action plan and its monitoring lacked a meaningful dialogue between civil society and government. The action plan content would benefit strongly from more stakeholder involvement to ensure commitments more closely reflect stakeholders' demands. Based on the challenges and findings identified in this report, this section presents the principal recommendations.

<i>TOP FIVE 'SMART' RECOMMENDATIONS</i>
Ensure the development of the next action plan is done in accordance with the recommendations of OGP and includes a wide range of stakeholders in the process, both during the development and the implementation of the OGP action plan.
Review and amend the lobbying regulations in Lithuania with the aim to expand the definition of lobbying, to achieve effective use of the lobby register, and to enhance transparency of lobbying by releasing all relevant data in open formats.
Create legal and technical guidelines for enhancing transparency in the beneficial ownership of companies registered or operating in Lithuania.
Ensure access to all official interest and asset disclosure declarations through a centralised online channel and in accordance with open data standards, and encourage relevant data release in open formats.
Ensure timely access to political party financial data through a centralised online channel in accordance with open data standards.

Eligibility Requirements: To participate in OGP, governments must demonstrate commitment to open government by meeting minimum criteria on key dimensions of open government. Third-party indicators are used to determine country progress on each of the dimensions. For more information, see section IX: Eligibility Requirements at the end of this report or visit: <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/how-it-works/eligibility-criteria>.

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



I. National Participation in OGP

History of OGP Participation

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

Lithuania began its formal participation in September 2011¹. In order to participate in OGP, governments must exhibit a demonstrated commitment to open government by meeting a set of (minimum) performance criteria on key dimensions of open government that are particularly consequential for increasing government responsiveness, strengthening citizen engagement, and fighting corruption. Objective, third party indicators are used to determine the extent of country progress on each of the dimensions. See “Section IX: Eligibility Requirements” for more details.

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

Lithuania finalized its second National Action Plan in April 2014. The effective period of implementation for the action plan submitted was April 2014 through July 2016. This report assesses progress made from 1 April 2014 to 30 June 2015.

It is the aim of the IRM to inform ongoing dialogue around development and implementation of future commitments in each OGP participating country. Methods and sources are dealt with in a methodological annex in this report.

Basic Institutional Context

The Office of the Government is the leading coordinating authority responsible for Lithuania’s OGP commitments. The Office of the Government assists the Prime Minister in implementing policies and coordinates activities of the ministries and other subordinate institutions in Lithuania. The office is accountable to the Parliament of Lithuania.

The office, to a certain extent, has legal powers to enforce policy changes on other agencies within the government. Upon completion of the development of the action plan, the office was appointed by the government decree as the institution to coordinate the implementation of the OGP action plan.

In February 2014, the Office of the Government initiated a working group composed of representatives of the Ministries of Transport and Communications, Social Security and Labour, Education and Science, and the Ministry of Interior and Information Society

Development Committee, which falls under the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

The working group is responsible for the development, implementation and monitoring of the OGP action plan. One of the goals for creating such a working group is to gather representatives of institutions that are mandated with powers needed to implement various parts of the action plan.

The action plan encompasses a number of commitments, ranging from promoting anti-corruption education to applying open data initiatives. Because many of the action plan commitments were derived from a number of other strategic documents and were developed by the agencies in charge of implementing them, the action plan includes a considerable number of commitments that are not highly ambitious, though well within the scope of [existing] legal powers of the assigned agencies.

In early 2015, the Office of the Government joined forces with the State Development Council, an intersectoral body in charge of developing and monitoring the Lithuania 2030 Strategy.² This body provides a collaborative platform of public, private institutions and civil society working together to develop the Lithuania 2030 Strategy, which is a living, strategic document that can evolve with the state vision until 2030). The State Development Council presented the OGP action plan as one of the strategic documents in the area of public governance improvement in the field of public governance reform. Both the OGP action plan and the Lithuania 2030 Strategy overlap in a few areas, such as strengthening civil empowerment and furthering transparent and smart public governance. For instance, both documents include the following outputs: (1) creating the National Civil Society Fund; (2) updating programmes of civic education at schools; (3) creating a public service catalogue; and (4) creating an open data model.

Methodological Note

The IRM partners with experienced, independent national researchers to author and disseminate reports for each OGP participating government. In Lithuania, the IRM partnered with Karolis Granickas, an experienced expert on public governance. Karolis Granickas reviewed the government's self-assessment report, gathered the views of civil society, and interviewed appropriate government officials and other stakeholders. OGP staff and a panel of experts reviewed the report.

To gather the voices of multiple stakeholders, the IRM researcher conducted numerous interviews with government representatives as well as representatives of civil society organisations and the private sector. The IRM researcher also contacted a large number of stakeholders through various mailing lists, providing them the opportunity to contribute with recommendations. One stakeholder forum was organised, which was conducted according to a focus group model. The IRM researcher also reviewed a number of action plan implementation reports that responsible authorities submitted to the Office of the Government, which were then later incorporated into the self-assessment report by the Office of the Government. Numerous references are made to these documents throughout this report.

Summary of the forum and more detailed explanations are given in the annex.

¹ <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/lithuania>

² An official website of the strategy "Lithuania 2030": <http://lietuva2013.lt>

II. Process: Action Plan Development

The Office of the Government took steps to include a wide range of stakeholders in the development of the OGP action plan such as organising an online public consultation as well as by holding a discussion with key stakeholders. It did not, however, sufficiently communicate the essence of the OGP initiative in a way that would allow interested stakeholders to contribute in a meaningful manner.

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

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

A fifth requirement, during consultation, is set out in the OGP Articles of Governance. This requirement is dealt with in “Section III: Consultation During Implementation”:

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

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

Table 1: Action Plan Consultation Process

Phase of Action Plan	OGP Process Requirement (Articles of Governance Section)	Did the government meet this requirement?
During Development	Were the timeline and process available prior to the consultation?	No
	Was the timeline available online prior to the consultation?	No
	Was the timeline available through other channels?	Yes
	Provide any links to the timeline.	Link to a press release inviting all interested to submit comments and suggestions: http://www.lrv.lt/lt/naujienos/aktualijos/?nid=14110 (last accessed in August 2014)

	Was there advance notice of the consultation?	No
	Was this notice adequate?	No
	Did the government carry out awareness-raising activities?	No
	Were consultations held online?	Yes
	Provide any links to online consultations.	http://www.lrv.lt/lt/veikla/viesosios-konsultacijos/atvira-vyriausybe/ (last accessed in August 2014)
	Were in-person consultations held?	Yes
	Was a summary of comments provided?	No
	Were consultations open or invitation only?	Open
	Place the consultations on the IAP2 spectrum. ¹	Consult
During Implementation	Was there a regular forum for consultation during implementation?	No
	Were consultations open or invitation only?	Open
	Place the consultations on the IAP2 spectrum.	Inform

Advance Notice and Awareness Raising

In February 2014, the OGP Support Unit (employees of OGP) acknowledged in a public statement² that Lithuania had failed to meet some of its commitments as a member of OGP. Subsequently, the local NGO Transparency International Lithuania³ issued a press release publicly urging the Lithuanian government to participate in the OGP process⁴. The press release received considerable attention in Lithuania.

A few months later, the Office of the Government issued a press release on the day of the beginning of the public consultation, a common practice of Lithuanian public institutions, It did not provide notice prior to the beginning of the public consultation on the development of the OGP action plan.

Depth and Breadth of Consultation

The Office of the Government issued a press release on its website (www.lrv.lt) inviting "all residents, social partners, business, associations representatives, and experts in various fields" to contribute to an online public consultation on the development of the OGP action plan. As there is no summary of contributions available, there is no evidence that any individual or entity responded to the call.

The consultation period amounted to 16 working days (20 calendar days). In the view of the IRM researcher, this is a sufficient amount of time for interested stakeholders to meaningfully contribute to the development of the action plan.

The Office of the Government invited government representatives and around ten prominent, non-governmental organisations to a round-table discussion. The discussion

was aimed at gathering comments and feedback on the draft action plan, which was distributed before the consultation took place. Fewer than fifteen participants attended the discussion, including representatives of NGOs, the Chancellor of the Government, assisting staff, and representatives of institutions responsible for the implementation of some of the commitments. The government did not introduce the goals, values, or processes of the OGP initiative or the action plan in the beginning of the meeting or state reasons for including particular policy areas into the action plan.

All interviewed participating organisations stated that during the meeting they had sufficient opportunities to raise questions and suggest ideas and that representatives of the government were responsive and attentive. However, after the meeting the content of the action plan was not changed, although the wording of some of the deliverables was amended.

According to the IRM researcher, participants of the discussion did not have sufficient knowledge and awareness about the way OGP works. Therefore, they did not perceive the discussion as an opportunity to help frame the outputs and outcomes of the action plan in a well-measured, timely, realistic, and relevant manner. As a result, the discussion was held on a conceptual level surrounding the issues dealt with in the action plan: reduction of corruption, social care, e-services, access to information, communication between government and society, etc.

While the Office of the Government provided sufficient channels, time, and opportunity to comment on the draft action plan, it failed to provide civil society and other stakeholders with meaningful opportunities for co-creation of the action plan.

¹ "IAP2 Spectrum of Political Participation," *International Association for Public Participation*, <http://bit.ly/1kMm1YC>

² A link to the official press release: <http://www.freedominfo.org/2014/02/lithuanis-malta-turkey-fall-behind-ogp-process/>.

³ Transparency International Lithuania. official website: www.transparency.lt

⁴ Example of an article in the Lithuanian press: <http://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/lietuvos-vyriausybe-atsisake-pateikti-duomenis-apie-valdzios-atviruma-56-406139>

III. Process: Consultation During Implementation

The Office of the Government took steps to gather input from multiple stakeholders and to inform them about the state of implementation of the OGP action plan. There is, however, no evidence suggesting that the Office of the Government established a multi-stakeholder forum to review implementation of the action plan.

Regular Multi-Stakeholder Consultation

The Office of the Government did not establish a multi-stakeholder forum that would regularly meet and review implementation of the action plan.

In early 2015, the Office of the Government gave the State Development Council – the intersectoral body responsible for developing and monitoring the Lithuania 2030 Strategy – oversight of the implementation of the OGP action. The State Development Council is a good fit for this responsibility because it benefits from its involvement in the Lithuania 2030 Strategy, its access to a wide range of multidisciplinary experts, and its resources for holding multiple forums.

On 1 July 2015, the State Development Council organised an open-call discussion with a wide range of government representatives and civil society organizations with the aim to present and receive feedback on the state of implementation of the action plan. During the event that was attended by 50 to 60 people, representatives of ministries responsible for implementation of respective parts of the action plan delivered presentations on their subject matter followed by question-and-answer sessions. Although the event was dedicated to outlining the implementation of the action plan, the speakers, instead, focused on broad issues surrounding the action plan and did not explicitly address the state of implementation of specific commitments. Additionally, organisers failed to introduce the OGP processes or the action plan in detail.

All presentation documents were later uploaded on the www.lietuva2030.lt webpage¹. According to the IRM researcher, the event did not substantially impact any of the commitments or their implementation strategies.

¹ Summary of the discussion: <https://www.lietuva2030.lt/lt/naujienos/964-diskusijos-atviros-vyriausybes-partneryste-lietuvoje-medziaga>

IV. Analysis of Action Plan Contents

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

Commitments should be appropriate to each country's unique circumstances and policy interests. OGP commitments should also 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

Commitments around access to information:

- Pertain to government-held information, as opposed to only information on government activities. As an example, releasing government-held information on pollution would be clearly relevant, although the information is not about "government activity" per se;
- Are not restricted to data but pertain to all information. For example, releasing individual construction contracts and releasing data on a large set of construction contracts;
- May include information disclosures in open data and the systems that underpin the public disclosure of data;
- May cover both proactive and/or reactive releases of information;
- May cover both making data more available and/or improving the technological readability of information;
- May pertain to mechanisms to strengthen the right to information (such as ombudsman's offices or information tribunals);
- Must provide open access to information (it should not be privileged or internal only to government);
- Should promote transparency of government decision making and carrying out of basic functions;
- May seek to lower cost of obtaining information; and
- Should strive to meet the 5 Star for Open Data design (<http://5stardata.info/>).

Civic Participation

Commitments around civic participation may pertain to formal public participation or to broader civic participation. They should generally seek to "consult," "involve," "collaborate," or "empower," as explained by the International Association for Public Participation's Public Participation Spectrum (<http://bit.ly/1kMmLYC>).

Commitments addressing public participation:

- Must 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 throughout the policy cycle;

- Can include elements of access to information to ensure meaningful input of interested members of the public; and
- Often include the right to have your voice heard, but do not necessarily include the right to be a formal part of a decision-making process.

Alternately, commitments may address the broader operating environment that enables participation in civic space. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Reforms increasing freedoms of assembly, expression, petition, press, or association;
- Reforms on association, including trade union laws or NGO laws; and
- Reforms improving the transparency and process of formal democratic processes such as citizen proposals, elections, or petitions.

The following commitments are examples of commitments that would **not** be marked as clearly relevant to the broader term, civic participation:

- Commitments that assume participation will increase due to publication of information without specifying the mechanism for such participation (although this commitment would be marked as “access to information”);
- Commitments on decentralization that do not specify the mechanisms for enhanced public participation; and
- Commitments that define participation as inter-agency cooperation without a mechanism for public participation.

Commitments that may be marked of “unclear relevance” also include those mechanisms where participation is limited to government-selected organizations.

Public Accountability

Commitments improving accountability can include:

- Rules, regulations, and mechanisms that call upon government actors to justify their actions, act upon criticisms or requirements made of them, and accept responsibility for failure to perform with respect to laws or commitments.

Consistent with the core goal of “Open Government,” to be counted as “clearly relevant,” such commitments must include a public-facing element, meaning that they are not purely internal systems of accountability. While such commitments may be laudable and may meet an OGP grand challenge, they do not, as articulated, meet the test of “clear relevance” due to their lack of openness. Where such internal-facing mechanisms are a key part of government strategy, it is recommended that governments include a public-facing element such as:

- Disclosure of non-sensitive metadata on institutional activities (following maximum disclosure principles);
- Citizen audits of performance; and
- Citizen-initiated appeals processes in cases of non-performance or abuse.

Strong commitments around accountability ascribe rights, duties, or consequences for actions of officials or institutions. Formal accountability commitments include means of formally expressing grievances or reporting wrongdoing and achieving redress.

Examples of strong commitments include:

- Improving or establishing appeals processes for denial of access to information;
- Improving access to justice by making justice mechanisms cheaper, faster, or easier to use;
- Improving public scrutiny of justice mechanisms; and
- Creating public tracking systems for public complaints processes (such as case tracking software for police or anti-corruption hotlines).

A commitment that claims to improve accountability but assumes that merely providing information or data without explaining what mechanism or intervention will translate that information into consequences or change would **not** qualify as an accountability commitment. See <http://bit.ly/1oWPXdl> for further information.

Technology and Innovation for Openness and Accountability

OGP aims to enhance the use of technology and innovation to enable public involvement in government. Specifically, commitments that use technology and innovation should enhance openness and accountability by:

- Promoting new technologies that offer opportunities for information sharing, public participation, and collaboration;
- Making more information public in ways that enable people to both understand what their governments do and to influence decisions; and
- Working to reduce costs of using these technologies.

Additionally, commitments that will be marked as technology and innovation:

- May commit to a process of engaging civil society and the business community to identify effective practices and innovative approaches for leveraging new technologies to empower people and promote transparency in government;
- May commit to supporting the ability of governments and citizens to use technology for openness and accountability; and
- May support the use of technology by government employees and citizens alike.

Not all eGovernment reforms improve openness of government. When an eGovernment commitment is made, it needs to articulate how it enhances at least one of the following: access to information, public participation, or public accountability.

Key Variables

Recognizing that achieving open government commitments often involves a multiyear process, governments should attach time frames and benchmarks to their commitments that indicate what is to be accomplished each year whenever possible. This report details each of the commitments the country included in its action plan and analyzes them for their first year of implementation.

All of the indicators and methods used in the IRM research can be found in the IRM Procedures Manual, available at (<http://www.opengovpartnership.org/about/about-irm>). One measure deserves further explanation due to its particular interest for readers and usefulness for encouraging a race to the top between OGP participating countries: the “starred commitment”. Starred commitments are considered exemplary OGP commitments. In order to receive a star, a commitment must meet several criteria:

1. It must be specific enough that a judgment can be made about its potential impact. Starred commitments will have "medium" or "high" specificity.

2. The commitment's language should make clear its relevance to opening government. Specifically, it must relate to at least one of the OGP values of Access to Information, Civic Participation, or Public Accountability.
3. The commitment would have a "transformative" potential impact if completely implemented.
4. Finally, the commitment must see significant progress during the action plan implementation period, receiving a ranking of "substantial" or "complete" implementation.

Based on these criteria, the Lithuanian action plan did not receive any starred commitments.

Note that the IRM updated the star criteria in early 2015 to raise the bar for model OGP commitments. Under the old criteria, a commitment received a star if it was measurable, clearly relevant to OGP values as written, of moderate or transformative potential impact, and substantially or completely implemented.

Finally, the graphs in this section present an excerpt of the wealth of data the IRM collects during its progress-reporting process. For the full dataset for Lithuania and all OGP participating countries, please consult the "OGP Explorer," which is available at: <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/explorer/>.

General Overview of the Commitments

The Lithuanian OGP action plan is structured around four umbrella initiatives, six areas of action, and 14 milestones. The majority of commitments in the action plan are derived from a number of other strategic documents. The Office of the Government publicly stated that it did not develop new commitments and included all pre-existing commitments from other strategic documents.

The action plan focuses on the following four umbrella initiatives:

- Improvement of public and administrative service provisions (both online and offline);
- Increasing public participation in public governance;
- Release of open data; and
- Reducing levels of corruption in Lithuania.

While some of commitments within these umbrella initiatives contain tangible outputs and indicators, the overarching shortcoming of the majority of commitments is a lack of specificity in terms of time frames, measurable outputs, and outcome indicators. As this report shows, the government undertook efforts to complete the vast majority of commitments in the action plan. At the time of writing of this report, many of the commitments were still ongoing.

Language

The way the government wrote the commitments makes it seem as though the commitments are already achieved (e.g., Systems *have been* created.). The IRM researcher has assumed they are intended outcomes (e.g., The government *will* create systems.).

Clustering

The IRM researcher did minor re-clustering of commitments and milestones to incorporate milestones that appear independent and thus facilitate the analysis of their completion. As a result, eight commitments, containing numerous milestones, provide the structure of this report.

1: Public Services Quality Improvements

Text of the commitment:

Initiative 1: customer-focused public services

Area: to improve the quality of services

Actions:

1. To make an inventory and **catalogue of public and administrative services**.
 - a. An inventory of the public and administrative services administered and provided by public administration authorities has been made, a list/catalogue of these services has been compiled and a methodology and indicators for measuring their provision have been created.

Start date: not specified

End date: 2014

2. To ensure the **monitoring** and assessment of **the quality of services**.
 - a. Studies have been carried out by ministries on the assessment of the appropriateness of the public and administrative services provided and/or administered by them and on the conformity of these services with public needs.
 - b. Quality performance criteria for service providing institutions have been laid down, serving the basis for the assessment of these institutions; publication of the results of the assessment.
 - c. Methodological recommendations for measuring user satisfaction with public services (service quality) have been developed for public administration authorities.
 - d. Studies aimed at determining the activity of public administration authorities as regards assessment of indicators for user satisfaction with services have been carried out.

Start date: 2014

End date: 2016

3. To **develop service quality standards**.
 - a. Minimum quality standards for services regulated by ministries have been developed and posted on the ministries' websites.
 - b. Recommendations for drawing up citizens' charters have been prepared.
 - c. A standard for the provision of public services at public administration authorities has been developed

Start date: 2014

End date: 2015

[emphasis added]

Responsible Institution: Ministry of the Interior

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance				Potential Impact				Completion			
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to information	Civic participation	Public accountability	Tech. and innov. for transparency and accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete
OVERALL		✓			Unclear					✓				✓		
1.1. Public and administrative services catalogue			✓		Unclear					✓					✓	
1.2. Quality of service monitoring		✓			Unclear					✓				✓		
1.3. Develop service quality standards		✓			Unclear					✓				✓		

What Happened?

This set of milestones aimed to improve service delivery by (1) creating an inventory of all administrative e-services and (2) creating a set of standards for service-providing institutions to help them evaluate the quality of service delivery.

At the time of writing of this report, all three milestones included under this commitment were ongoing. According to the information provided by the Ministry of Interior (MoI), the Ministry had taken substantial steps to complete them.

Milestone 1.1. During the implementation period, the MoI developed an online service catalogue/database that can be found at <http://www.lietuva.gov.lt/>. It lists more than 9,000 services from 217 national and municipal institutions. The database sorts and filters all of the collected information to improve accuracy and search functionality, but the catalogue in its current state is only an inventory of services and cannot link users to service providers. However, the MoI plans to link the catalogue with the main e-service provision website www.epaslaugos.lt in the future, according to a ministry official.

Milestone 1.2. During the implementation period, the MoI reported that it had coordinated initiatives with all ministries in the field of service evaluation and improvement. It developed *the collection of sample criteria to evaluate activities of institutions providing public and administrative services*. The MoI presented this document to all ministries, which were then invited to conduct an analysis of their (and institutions under their control) activities and goals according to the suggested criteria and develop a report with key institutional activities and evaluation indicators. Ten out of fourteen ministries responded to the call and presented the MoI with an analysis of their activities and evaluation indicators. According to an interview with a ministry official, after having systemised the information, the ministry is currently planning to offer other ministries a set of criteria that they can use when drafting their activity plans.

Milestone 1.3. During the implementation period, the Ministry of Interior reported that it had prepared the draft of the guideline “Service Standards. Recommendations for Public Institutions.” The publication includes recommendations for public institutions on developing service quality standards, citizen charters and advice on how to integrate service standard development with an institution’s strategic goals. The ministry will introduce the recommendations to all institutions providing public services, though it has not specified a publication date.

While the government has begun implementing a number of outputs, it has not started work on some substantial portions of this commitment. Neither the interviews with ministerial officials nor the website search indicated any progress or completion of the following outputs: (1) posting on ministerial websites the minimum quality standards for services provided by ministries; and (2) developing methodological recommendations for measuring user satisfaction with public services for public administration authorities.

Did It Matter?

As written, it is unclear how this commitment relates to OGP values of access to information, civic participation, and public accountability.

As there was no source of information that provides an oversight of available public services online, all interviewed stakeholders welcomed the creation of the public service catalogue online and look forward to the finalized service and provision quality standards. The European Commission (EC) eGovernment report¹ together with the Digital Economy and Society Index² indicate that in terms of Internet penetration rates (82.1% in 2014³) and e-infrastructure, Lithuania has the potential to become a role model in providing public and administrative services online. For this commitment to have a greater impact, however, the catalogue will need to be integrated with the main service provision portal that citizens use, www.epaslaugos.lt.

In interviews, stakeholders also pointed out the importance of ensuring that institutions adopt and adhere to activity evaluation criteria. They should also develop service provision quality standards.

As MoI has not developed yet the publication on recommendations for service provision, there was no trustworthy information at the disposal of the IRM researcher indicating whether institutions adopt the recommendations and what possible impact the publication may have on better service provision and increased user satisfaction.

The IRM researcher and a number of interviewed stakeholders identified a gap. The government still does not pay enough attention to adopting and applying modern user satisfaction evaluation methods, and the feedback mechanisms are rarely used with the exception of a few examples, such as the newly developed online platform for all ministries, www.lrv.lt.

Moving Forward

The IRM researcher recommends that the future commitments in the area of public service provision include milestones that are directly relevant to OGP values of access to information, citizen participation, and public accountability. For example, future commitments could focus on making the development and implementation of service quality standards transparent and accessible to a wider range of stakeholders outside of the government agencies. E-service portals could include functions offering input on user satisfaction and customer feedback.

In addition, stakeholders recommend that the government takes the following steps to improve the quality of supplying e-services:

- Integrate the online service catalogue <http://www.lietuva.gov.lt/> with the centralised e-services portal www.epaslaugos.lt to increase interoperability of platforms;
- Make the minimum service provision standards binding to all institutions providing public and administrative services; and
- Integrate user satisfaction surveys into e-service providing portals.

¹ European Commission. *eGovernment Benchmark Framework 2012-2015*. Web. <http://bit.ly/1RtqNfT>

² European Commission. The Digital Economy and Society Index. Web. <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/desi>

³ Internet Usage in the European Union –EU28, Internet World Stat. 2015. Web. <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats9.htm#eu>

2: Developing and Promoting E-Services

Text of the commitment:

Initiative 1: customer-focused public services

Area: to develop and promote e-services

Responsible authority: Information Society Development Committee under the Ministry of Transport and Communications

Actions:

1. To carry out projects for **online service dissemination** at public library.
 - a. The capacities of the people to use electronic services have been enhanced, together with their awareness of new technologies and e-services.
 - b. Digital exclusion across Lithuania has been reduced – people are encouraged to learn more and develop their skills towards a successful application of the ICT. The share of individuals using electronic public and administrative services in 2014 has accounted for 46 per cent, in 2015 – 50 per cent, in 2016 – 52 per cent.
2. By employing new technologies, to develop solutions for improving public and administrative services geared to promote the use of e-services and the provision of services through a centralized portal, **e-Government Gateway** (www.epaslaugos.lt).
 - a. Public and administrative services have been brought online to the maximum extent possible. In 2014, the share of major public and administrative services brought online (at the highest level of electronic maturity) has accounted for 83 per cent, 2015 – 90 per cent, 2016 – 93 per cent.
 - b. A high level of bringing services of public relevance online has been ensured, electronic solutions are being developed and implemented making it possible to receive services at one contact point. The number of e-service users has been growing, while ensuring the principles of equal treatment and non-discrimination. A year-on-year growth in the number of visitors at eGovernment Gateway (www.epaslaugos.lt): in 2014 – 737.4 thousand, 2015 – 759.5 thousand, 2016 – 782.3.
 - c. The quality of life of Lithuania's population and the productivity of enterprises have grown up by using opportunities offered by the ICT. The goal is to make sure that by 2020 at least 85 per cent of the Lithuanian population use the Internet (75 per cent in 2015) and 100 per cent of enterprises use high-speed internet (50 per cent in 2015).

[emphasis added]

Responsible institution: Information Society Development Committee under the Ministry of Transport and Communications

Supporting institutions: Not specified

Start date: 2014

End date: 2016

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance				Potential Impact				Completion			
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to information	Civic participation	Public accountability	Tech. and innov. for transparency and accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete
OVERALL		✓			Unclear					✓				✓		
2.1. Online service dissemination		✓			Unclear					✓				✓		
2.2. Increase services on e-Government Gateway		✓			Unclear					✓					✓	

What Happened?

This commitment aims to increase the online provision of public and administrative services and to promote their wider public usage.

Lithuania has achieved significant progress in e-governance. The country ranks eleventh out of all EU states in the annual Digital Economy and Society Index, which summarizes relevant indicators on Europe's digital performance and tracks the evolution of EU member states in digital competitiveness¹. In terms of actual use of e-services, Lithuania ranks eighth in the same index, with 43% of citizens requesting information from public institutions online.

Milestone 2.1. This completion of this milestone, which covers online service dissemination, remains limited.

The Information Society Development Committee² (ISDC) under the Ministry of Communications and Transport reports creating two concrete outputs relevant to the achievement of this commitment:

(1) In 2014, the ICDS created a portal www.prisijungusi.lt with the aim to promote use of e-services. The ICDS updates the website at least three times a week with articles on benefits of e-service use. However, the outreach of the initiative remains unclear, and the ISDC officials did not provide the IRM researcher with website traffic statistics.

In addition, the ISDC reports to have continuously been promoting the use of e-services through alternative media means, such as the TV, radio, and local media outlets. The ISDC did not provide any quantitative results indicating the scale of promotion outputs or outreach. One of the stakeholders confirmed to have seen outputs of the awareness-raising campaign numerous times and noted that the campaign was well designed and frequent. However, he also remarked that the targeting of the campaign may need adjustments and doubted if mass media channels were the best option. His suggestion was to tailor the promotion of particular e-services to specific target audiences (for instance, young parents-to-be in regards to child birth, etc.).

(2) In mid-2015, the ISDC, the association “Langas į ateitį”³ (a cooperative alliance between leading Lithuanian telecommunication companies and government institutions), the Ministry of Interior, and the Communications Regulatory Authority have crafted an initiative to conduct a large-scale promotion and education campaign regarding e-services throughout Lithuania in 2015-2016. The essence of the initiative is to raise awareness and develop public capacities to use information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure (including in public libraries) and e-services. The group has submitted the initiative to the Ministry of Interior for funding approval.

While the percentage of citizens using e-services has been increasing (from 40% in 2014 to 44% in 2015), this milestone has not yet reached the target outlined in the action plan, falling short by 6 percentage points both years.

Milestone 2.2 The milestone pertaining to the increase of e-services on the e-Government Gateway has demonstrated substantial progress. A significant number of e-services have been added to the State Information Resources Interoperability Platform (SIRIP), which has been recognised by the European Commission as a good practice example in providing e-services via the centralised portal – www.epaslaugos.lt.

The ISDC officially reports that in 2014 88% of key public and administrative services were provided online at the highest level of electronic maturity, meaning no extra steps required offline for the user. In 2015, municipalities added sixty-five new services to the service package of [the portal](#) as well as twenty-nine services provided by national institutions. During the first nine months of 2015, the portal received almost 1.4 visits and more than 500,000 unique visitors. In total, the portal currently provides 629 e-services compared to 353 e-services in 2013 and 511 in 2014.

Did It Matter?

The government does not clearly articulate the commitment’s relevance to the OGP values of access to information, civil participation, and public accountability. The majority of commitment outputs are directly linked to better service provision through digitization, but it is unclear how this would open government.

Stakeholders have pointed out that the key challenge with e-service provision is the lack of public awareness and outreach. However, the actions outlined in this commitment are not sufficient to reach the milestone of having 50% of the population using e-services. Therefore, the potential of the commitment is rated as minor. The IRM researcher suggests that the government makes e-services more user focused by involving users in the co-creation of services. In addition, it is important to provide response mechanisms online for user feedback.

Overall, in terms of an ICT literate population and share of services provided online, Lithuania is in the group of well-developed EU countries. Currently, 96% of public libraries provide Internet work stations for free⁴. A significant amount of the EU structural funds was invested in the Lithuanian public ICT infrastructure in the financing cycle of 2007-2013. The strategic plan of the EU funding cycle 2014-2020 indicates that the focus on improving ICT infrastructure in Lithuania will remain.

As ISDC officials pointed out, it is strategically justifiable that the next step is conducting a large-scale, awareness-raising campaign, which was mentioned in Milestone 1.2.

Almost all interviewed stakeholders agreed that it is of immense importance to pay particular attention to promotion and awareness-raising activities if the share of the population using online public and administrative services is to grow.

While recognizing significant work done by the institutions in this area, one of the interviewed stakeholders remarked that decentralised financing and isolated development of technology systems at various institutions cause platforms and services to not be interoperable. A number of interviewed stakeholders also criticized the SIRIP for its technology dependence, such as not using open source solutions.

Moving Forward

Should the government decide to incorporate this commitment in the next action plan, it should put a stronger emphasis on promotion and awareness-raising activities and consider further improvements in the ICT systems. In addition, the government could focus on strengthening e-government efficiency and user convenience by developing efficiency and user-satisfaction indicators to judge performance.

The IRM researcher recommends that future commitments in this area clearly articulate the relevance to the OGP values of increased transparency, participation and accountability. Future commitments could also include transparency standards in implementing ICT infrastructure projects, including publishing financial expenditures online.

In addition, stakeholders recommend the following steps:

- Apply an interoperability requirement for ICT systems when developing further information systems in the public sector. This requirement would allow systems across multiple institutions to interoperate, eliminating technical obstacles to the integration of services across institutions;
- Use online media and/or outreach campaigns at public libraries; and
- Increase use of user-satisfaction questionnaires online and publish the results on official institutions' websites.

¹ European Commission. The Digital Economy and Society Index. Web. <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/desi>

² Website for the Information Society Development Committee under the Ministry of Transport: <http://ivpk.lrv.lt/>

³ Association “Langas į Ateitį”. Official website: <http://langasiateiti.epilietis.eu/index.php/en/>

⁴ “What helps to overcome digital divide in Lithuania?” European Commission, Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe, April 2015, web. <https://ec.europa.eu/epale/en/content/what-helps-overcome-digital-divide-lithuania>

3: Encouraging Public Participation

Text of the commitment:

Initiative 2: Public participation in public governance

Area: to encourage public administration authorities to have consultations with people

Actions:

1. To ensure public consultations and **facilitate public involvement** in public governance processes.
 - a. Legal regulation of public consultations has been improved –main consultation principles, terms and standards have been established.
 - b. Proposals received and implemented through public consultations are made public, new technologies are employed for consultations.
 - c. With a view to enhancing public involvement in public administration, information is provided, already at the school level and extending to other levels of the education system, about opportunities for accessing information held by the State, and public involvement in the processes of public governance (Ministry of Education and Science).
 - d. To enable the public to express its opinion on the quality of provided services, efforts are made to ensure the greatest possible public involvement in the administration of institutions providing education, health, social security and public security services, thus enhancing the role of the councils in these institutions (Ministry of Education and Science).
 - e. The Council of Non-governmental Organisations (and advisory institution) has been set up to ensure the participation of NGOs in establishing, shaping and implementing NGO development policy (Ministry of Social security and Labour).

Responsible institution: *Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Social Security and Labour*

Supporting institutions: Not specified

Start date: 2014

End date: 2016

2. To implement a **measure promoting active involvement** by local communities and individuals **in decision-making** as regards responding to public needs in the fields of local community relevance.
 - a. In 2014 at least 90 per cent of the total activities approved by the decisions of the Local Community Council, involving all municipalities, have been implemented.
 - b. Capacities of the people, community organisation managers and the most active community members to represent community interests in finding best solutions to the problems have been enhanced. Community self-governance increased. In order to evaluate the efficiency of communal participation in public administration processes, developments in their involvement in these processes have been observed, best practices of cooperation between public administration authorities and communities have been shared, and the effectiveness of decisions adopted together with the public has been analysed.

Responsible institution: *Ministry of Social Security and Labour*

Supporting institutions: Not specified

Start date: not specified

End date: 2015

3. *To develop and implement measures encouraging people and local communities to participate in local decision-making*

An informational-methodological publication has been developed for the representatives of local communities (seniūnaičiai), which provides information about the rights of the people and the possibilities of participating in local decision making, other information of local relevance (e.g. safe neighbourhood, emergency telephone number 112 etc); relevant legal information is provided in a simple, reader-friendly form. All the representatives of local communities (seniūnaičiai) will receive necessary information in the manner acceptable to them. The results of the monitoring of popular surveys will be made public.

Responsible institution: *Ministry of the Interior*

Supporting institutions: Not specified

Start date: 2014

End date: 2016

[emphasis added]

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance				Potential Impact				Completion			
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to information	Civic participation	Public accountability	Tech. and innov. for transparency and accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete
OVERALL			✓		✓	✓		✓		✓					✓	
3.1. Facilitate public involvement			✓		✓	✓		✓			✓			✓		
3.2. Measure promoting involvement		✓			✓	✓				✓					✓	
3.3. Encourage participation in local decision making			✓		✓	✓				✓					✓	

What Happened?

The commitment contains three deliverables that all contribute to the engagement of community members in public governance and decision making. Each milestone addresses key stakeholders: public institutions; local community representatives, including community managers and leaders; and communities themselves.

According to the information provided by the three ministries in charge of the commitment, all three milestones were ongoing and in varying stages of completion.

Milestone 3.1. This milestone saw limited completion. It listed a number of expected outputs aiming at improving the process for public consultations. While there were positive developments in terms of improving the legal environment and creating online means for public involvement, the number of consultations held and submissions received were very small.

On 1 January 2014, prior to the beginning of the implementation period of the action plan, the amendment of the Law on Legislative Framework¹ took effect. The law establishes two key principles – consultations have to be conducted (a) in a timely manner and (b) in a proportional way, meaning that consultations should only take place when considered necessary. The law does not define any further aspects of public consultations, such as means of publishing calls and results, etc.

An official from the Ministry of Education and Science explained that public consultations don't just cover specific elements and, furthermore, have varying topics, stakeholder groups, and target audiences. Therefore, overregulation of public consultations with parliamentary legislation may be harmful and there should be left some discretion to institutions. On the opposing side, one of the interviewed representatives of a prominent NGO says that the Law on Legislative Framework should include at least minimum standards when determining if a consultation is necessary, what the rules on publishing calls and notice periods should be, duty to publish results online, etc.

According to the government self-assessment report, the Ministry of Education and Science reported to have conducted at least 13 public consultations between June 2014 and June 2015.

The desk research, conducted by the IRM researcher, revealed that eight out of fourteen ministries use the portal system www.lrv.lt for public consultations and standardised their online pages according to the shared template in 2015. They also share the same *e-citizen* platform at <http://epilietis.lrv.lt/> and host their public consultations online at <http://epilietis.lrv.lt/lt/konsultacijos-su-visuomene/viesosios-konsultacijos>. In 2015, they used the system for five public consultations and received one short comment. The portal allows anyone interested to suggest a topic for public consultation.

Regarding the establishment of the NGO Council, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour reports that the NGO Council has been formally established and its articles confirmed in July 2014. The council is intended to represent the interests of NGOs in legislative processes, to consult with state institutions regarding matters related to NGOs, to provide bi-annual overviews about the NGO situation in Lithuania, and more. According to the Law on NGO Development, the largest NGO associations in the country delegate ten NGO representatives to the council by way of consensus. There is no further explanation regarding the selection or delegation processes.

Since the NGO Council's inception, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour held four council meetings, confirmed the 2015-2016 action plan, and developed working groups for various priorities. Members of the NGO Council interviewed by the IRM researchers confirmed these activities took place.

Milestone 3.2. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour confirmed the Programme of Local Self-Governance in March 2014 and allocated around EUR 2.3 million (for the year 2014) for initiatives aimed at satisfying public needs and the demands of local communities in social, educational, and cultural spheres in all 60 municipalities in Lithuania. Local Community Councils – a body composed of local community leaders and representatives of local organisations – could decide which initiatives to support. More than 2,500 decisions were taken with an overall implementation success rate of 99.6%. The funds allocated for the local governance program in 2015 amount to more than EUR 2.6 million. ²

Milestone 3.3. The IRM researcher derived three outputs from the text of the action plan: (1) developing an informational, methodological publication on involving the community in public decision making addressed to representatives of local

communities; (2) providing all local community representatives with information relevant to their functions; and (3) publishing results of community polls/surveys. The Ministry of Interior developed and published an informational booklet for local community representatives – locally elected officials who represent the smallest administrative unit in Lithuania, *Seniūnaitija*. The publication focuses on key aspects of local governance and information that local community representatives should know to fulfill their duties as prescribed in the Law on Local Self-Governance.³ The duties of representatives include representing city resident in decision-making processes, coordinating community actions, initiating local community surveys, and providing residents with relevant public governance information.

Reportedly, the publication has been well received by representatives of local communities. The Ministry of Interior official reported that other ministries will update the publication with information within the scope of their responsibilities. There is no actual plan for how or when this will happen. A few local representatives said they received the publication. They welcomed it as a positive effort to consolidate all information related to their duties, especially when considering the broad legal description of local representatives' duties. One of the local representatives interviewed remarked that the publication is particularly useful for newly elected local representatives as guidelines for representing local communities.

In August 2015, the Ministry of Interior has signed a collaboration agreement with the Union of Local Community Organizations (<http://www.lvbos.lt/>), which is an organisation promoting collaboration among community groups and the strengthening of local community organisations in Lithuania. The agreement imposes a duty on the ministry to consult and provide the union with training materials and all relevant information in the fields of local governance, regional development, and society security. The union undertook a duty to collaborate with the ministry in initiatives concerning local governance and support the ministry in a number of other ways.

In 2014 - 2015, the Ministry of Interior conducted monitoring of practices related to public polls by all municipalities in Lithuania. A report by the ministry⁴ reveals that there were 28 polls conducted on issues related to general municipal matters, such as territorial borders and their names. The results indicated that residents do not sufficiently participate in public polls. In a publication, the ministry suggested that the reasons behind low participation levels are (1) burdensome methods of polling; (2) public distrust in public institutions; and (3) the fact that poll results are not binding upon municipal councils, etc.⁵

Did It Matter?

The commitment is vaguely worded and lacks a specific focus. It set out to achieve a number of outcomes without specifying concrete actions or designating responsible institutions.

An interviewed representative⁶ of one of the leading public policy NGOs in Lithuania remarked that the public consultation model in Lithuania is largely non-functional. Efforts of both national and municipal institutions to involve local communities in decision making remain fragmented and scarce. Additionally, institutions are not mandated to conduct public consultations, and when they do there are no rules governing the format of those consultations.

The IRM researcher identified a number of indicators attesting to the level of public participation in consultations: (1) only 5% of Lithuanians participated in any type of municipal public consultation in 2014⁷ and almost 80% of respondents reported to not have a willingness to participate in public consultations at all⁸; (2) levels of public trust in institutions remain low (only 41% of Lithuanians trusted public institutions in

2013⁹); and (3) 64% of residents did not receive any type of information concerning public issues in their municipalities and *Seniūnijos* (smallest administrative unit in Lithuania)¹⁰;

In addition, a representative of the Civil Society Institute (CSI) pointed to low public awareness about means to engage into decision-making. The Study on Government - NGO Collaboration in Public Policy Decision Making, conducted by the CSI revealed that only 55% of the general public and 45% of public sector employees are aware of ways to participate in public consultation.¹¹

Moreover, one of the ministerial officials remarked that the key obstacle in holding a meaningful public consultation in Lithuania is difficulty in getting relevant stakeholders interested and getting them to submit their opinions.

Another civil society representative remarked that neither the government nor municipal institutions engaged in visible, proactive efforts to include NGOs in setting up public consultations. Local NGOs are often closer to local communities and are better positioned to reach out to citizens, but government institutions barely make use of this pre-existing collaboration.

A representative of one of the largest NGO in the country, Human Rights Monitoring Institute (HRMI) remarked that the practice to include civil society organizations into lawmaking has become more widespread. However, the major flaw of such practice is the failure of the authorities to take into account the input of civil society organizations. For instance, the HRMI participated in the drafting process of the Law on the Fundamentals of Child Rights Protection within a working group convened by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor. Six months after the working group completed its work, the Ministry submitted a new version of the draft law for parliamentary consideration, without taking into account the majority of comments provided by CSOs. The Ministry then would state that they have indeed consulted the civil society in the drafting process.

The IRM researcher noted that there were a few good examples in 2014-2015 of government institutions working with an NGO to hold a public discussion. For example, Transparency International Lithuania Chapter held two public discussions in the last twelve months with the Lithuania Police Department and the Special Investigation Service.

With regards to establishment of the NGO Council, the output has ostensibly been achieved, but, according to one of the representatives of a prominent NGO in the country, the council has notable shortcomings. First, there are no set criteria for selecting council members. Second, the council does not have a conflict of interest policy that governs the decisions of the council members.

Moving Forward

The IRM researcher recommends that the future commitments in this area should focus on enhancing meaningful consultations with reasonable time limits, the highest transparency standards (publishing submissions, feedback, and all related information on official websites, etc.), and the maximum effort from the government to gather multiple inputs from stakeholder groups;

Commitments should include measurable indicators in terms of the growth of stakeholder contributions towards public consultations.

Institutions that conduct public consultations could self-regulate and develop policies/procedures that would help make consultations more useful for the public, including clear timeframes, notice periods, means of consultation, etc.

CSOs generally agree that clearer guidelines are needed for national and municipal institutions on holding a public consultation:

- It would be useful to raise awareness about the newly created, integrated system, www.lrv.lt, as a channel for citizens to engage in public consultations with national institutions;
- It is essential to ensure awareness raising about public consultation mechanisms on behalf of public sector employees and to build capacity of institutions (putting particular emphasis on the municipal level) to conduct consultations with the public; and
- The NGO Council could adopt clear criteria on selecting council members and develop a conflict of interest policy so that council members avoid conflicts of interest when making recommendations to the government.

¹ The Republic of Lithuania Legislative Framework Law. 18 September 2012. Web. <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/TAR.B4FA4C56B8D5>

² More about the program can be found here: <http://bit.ly/1PYWUmR>

³ Law on Local Governance (Lit. Lietuvos Respublikos vietos savivaldos įstatymas): <http://bit.ly/1OUWwYR>

⁴ Monitoring report of local municipality polls (Lit. Vietos gyventojų apklausų 2013-2014 stebėseną): <http://bit.ly/1NF8TKi>

⁵ The results of survey of municipalities on community polls are published online and can be found at: <http://bit.ly/1NF8TKi>

⁶ Interview with Rūta Mrazauskaitė, Transparency International Lithuanian Chapter, 2015 October 12

⁷ Survey on municipal openness, Transparency International Lithuania, 2014 (Lit. Lietuvos gyventojų apklausa apie savivaldybių atvirumą): <http://bit.ly/1PPIZFu>

⁸ Survey on municipal openness, Transparency International Lithuania, 2014 (Lit. Lietuvos gyventojų apklausa apie savivaldybių atvirumą): <http://bit.ly/1PPIZFu>

⁹ Survey on trust in public institutions and service evaluation, Vilmorus, 2013 (Lit. Pasitikėjimo valstybės ir savivaldybių institucijomis ir aptarnavimo kokybės vertinimas): vakokybe.vrm.lt/get.php?f.836

¹⁰ Survey on trust in public institutions and service evaluation, Vilmorus, 2013 (Lit. Pasitikėjimo valstybės ir savivaldybių institucijomis ir aptarnavimo kokybės vertinimas): vakokybe.vrm.lt/get.php?f.836

¹¹ Strengthening collaboration between NGOs and the Government in public decision-making, Civil Society Institute, 2015 (Lit. Valdžios ir nevyriausybinio sektorių bendradarbiavimo viešosios politikos sprendimų priėmimo procese stiprinimas):<http://bit.ly/1ntpaH2>

4: Raising Civic Awareness

Text of the commitment:

Initiative 2: Public participation in public governance

Area: raising civic awareness

Action: To update civic and historical education at school

Expected outcome:

1. *Enhancing the quality and competitive capacity of general and higher education systems: **civic and historical education has been updated at schools. Civic and national identity education projects have been implemented.** Arrangements have been made for educational civic activities and personal development across the country, various organisational forms thereof are being developed, thus encouraging the strengthening of local and national organisations of pupils and students.*
2. *The growth of the Civic Empowerment Index in 2012 was 35.0, in 2017 – 40.0.*
3. *Growth of the Civic Empowerment Index for pupils and students in 2013 was 46.0, and in 2014 – 46.7.*

[Emphasis added]

Responsible institution: Ministry of Education and Science

Supporting institutions: Not specified

Start date: 2014

End date: 2020

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance				Potential Impact				Completion			
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to information	Civic participation	Public accountability	Tech. and innov. for transparency and accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete
OVERALL		✓			Unclear					✓				✓		
4.1a. Civic education update		✓			Unclear					✓					✓	
4.1b. Implement civic education project		✓			Unclear					✓				✓		

What Happened?

The broad wording of this commitment carries uncertainty as to what exactly it is supposed to achieve. The commitment is unclear about what projects and initiatives should be conducted, and it does not include sufficient information about performance and outcome indicators. In addition, the commitment's period of implementation ends in 2020, and it does not provide a timeline for implementation during the current action plan implementation period.

The IRM researcher derived two milestones from the first expected outcome. They are to (a) update civic education curriculum and (b) implement civic and national identity projects.

The IRM researcher believes that the government included this commitment in the action plan because of the 2013 Ukrainian revolution and the following incursion of Russian forces into Ukrainian territory. The propaganda war with Lithuania's eastern neighbor was widely scrutinized in the public domain, and the Lithuanian government turned its attention to increasing the civil consciousness of Lithuanian citizens. In addition to this series of steps, by the government, the Ministry of Education and Science has increased its focus on civil education at schools.

Since 2007, the civic empowerment levels in Lithuania have been measured annually by the Civic Empowerment Index, which is conducted by the Civil Society Institute.¹ The index indicates how civically engaged citizens are and how much they feel as though their voice matters in decision-making processes. It is the only measure in the country that shows how prepared citizens are to take part in politics, NGO activities, and charities, and it gives a glimpse into how citizens see themselves and their role in public life.

The 2012 Index suggests that young people are among the most empowered groups of Lithuanian society, but the level of youth empowerment in primary and secondary education is low, evaluated to be 47.6 points out of a possible 100².

The Ministry of Education and Science, the agency responsible for this commitment, reported a number of activities carried out under this commitment, including updating the Lithuanian language curriculum for primary and secondary schools; developing the relevant teaching modules on shaping youth civic and national consciousness; supporting a number of patriotic, educational youth campaigns; and holding two forums for Lithuanian language and history teachers on Lithuanian story telling. According to the self-assessment report, the general education programme of 2015- 2017 increased the amount of academic hours of civic education from five to twenty per academic year.

Did It Matter?

The government intends for this commitment to contribute to a score of 40 on the Civic Empowerment Index in 2017 (compared to 35 in 2012). However, as written, the main activities have targeted national identity teaching rather than focusing on educating the public about their rights and responsibilities, an application that could strengthen overall citizen empowerment in the country. Therefore, the relevance of this commitment to the OGP values of access to information, civic participation, and public accountability is unclear.

One of the academics leading the Civic Empowerment Index noted that the level of participation in nation-wide environmental or charity campaigns dropped, thus potentially partly affecting lower levels of civic empowerment in Lithuania. In addition, one of the primary school teachers interviewed remarked that the attention paid to civic education by the Ministry of Education and Science has not increased in the last few years.

A representative of the Human Rights Monitoring Institute (HRMI) points to a worrisome situation regarding low levels of awareness about citizens' legal rights. In 2014, a significant portion of the Lithuanian population (46.1%) did not know which institution to address in case of violation of their rights.

Through multiple interviews with CSO representatives, the IRM researcher found that in 2015 the Ministry of Education and Science, in fact, attempted to include a wider range of stakeholders in a public discussion about the development of civic education in

Lithuania and put together a working group of multidisciplinary experts to advise the Ministry on strategic decisions concerning this topic. While the idea was welcomed by a number of organisations, especially CSOs, the working group did not collaborate effectively and slowly weakened, as reported by a representative of a CSO who was part of the working group.

A number of teachers interviewed welcomed the new material produced by the Ministry of Education and Science. However, they emphasised the need for additional resources to help them implement new teaching materials and programmes. Reportedly, the ministry did not complement the new programmes and materials with the necessary training or financial/material resources needed to implement them.

Moving Forward

The IRM researcher recommends that the government take steps to ensure that future commitments in the area of civic education include specific activities that contribute to citizen empowerment. In order to promote open government, the commitment will need to focus more on the rights and duties of Lithuanian citizens and their participation in electoral processes. In addition, commitments should have clear and measurable milestones and include a wider range of stakeholders in conducting initiatives that promote youth participation and democratic habits.

While a number of stakeholders agree that programme updates and new teaching materials are beneficial, schools are often left on their own when it comes to practical implementation of these measures and programmes. Interviewed stakeholders suggest that teaching materials and updated programmes should be complemented with required resources. In general, the Ministry of Education and Science should let more stakeholders have a voice in defining the strategic direction of civic education in Lithuania. In addition, the HRMI points to the need for public legal education in order to raise civic empowerment in Lithuania. Lastly, a representative of the Civil Society Institute suggested that NGOs should be more closely involved in the shaping of civic education strategies by creating regular mechanisms for NGOs to contribute.

¹ Civil Society Institute. Official website: <http://www.civitas.lt/en/>

² Civic Empowerment Index 2012. Web. <http://www.civitas.lt/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/CIVIC-EMPOWERMENT-INDEX-2012.pdf>

5: National Civil Society Fund Model Development

Text of the commitment:

Initiative 2: public participation in public governance

Area: raising civic awareness

Action: To develop a model for the National Civil Society Fund.

Expected outcome:

Several versions of the model for the National Civil Society Fund have been designed. They have been discussed with social partners and the selected version has been presented at the Government Strategic Committee.

Responsible institution: Ministry of Social Security and Labour

Supporting institutions: Not specified

Start date: not specified

End date: 2014

Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance				Potential Impact				Completion			
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to information	Civic participation	Public accountability	Tech. and innov. for transparency and accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete
		✓				✓				✓				✓		

What happened?

This commitment aims to develop a model for the National Civil Society Fund to distribute government funding to Lithuanian NGOs.

Lithuania does not have a centralised fund to distribute government funding to NGOs. Officials have been debating the usefulness of such a mechanism for many years. However, the government has not taken any specific action on the matter since 1990. Currently, NGO financial sustainability largely depends on smaller-scale, project-based funding for organisations, and that funding comes mainly from international foundations, the European Commission, foreign embassies, corporate donors, and the like.

Just before the government developed the action plan in 2014, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour conducted an exploratory study on relevant experiences from a number of countries and developed an initial concept for the fund mechanism¹.

During the first year of action plan implementation, the ministry reported a number of actions taken in developing the fund model. It conducted a thorough analysis of best practices from Latvia, Estonia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Poland and developed two alternatives of the fund model: centralised and specialised. Currently, organisations that have one of the three legal forms – public entity, association, or charity fund – can qualify as an NGO, having satisfied criteria prescribed in the NGO Development Law. NGO is not a legal status/form of organisation in Lithuania, and its definition is vague and ambiguous. As a result, it is unclear how much public funding actually goes to organisations that qualify as NGOs, according to the Law on NGOs Development.

Because there is little information regarding public agencies funding NGOs, the ministry is now developing an impact analysis of a suggested fund model. When interviewed in mid-2015, a knowledgeable official reported that the ministry expects to submit the suggested model for final consideration to the Office of the Government in October 2015. (This will be assessed at the end of the two-year action plan.)

In early 2014 during a meeting of the Commission for Coordination of NGO Matters (an intersectoral body responsible for advising on NGO matters), the Ministry of Social Security and Labour invited NGOs to participate in an informal working group on the fund model development process. Reportedly, the informal working group has not met since and is currently inactive.²

Did It Matter?

This commitment is relevant to the OGP values due to its two intentions: (1) to strengthen NGO and public sector support through a sustainable funding mechanism and (2) to strengthen the financial capacities of civil society by creating a single and transparent funding mechanism. However, the potential impact of the commitment lies with further implementation of the funding model. In particular, substantial work needs to be done to ensure transparency of the funding mechanism and objectivity and impartiality in its further functioning. The development of the fund model itself is only a prerequisite to achieving its objectives.

The idea of a National Civil Society Fund is not new in Lithuania. A number of NGOs have been promoting the idea for a decade, but the government did not give it substantial support. Although stakeholders have opposing views about whether the fund can have a significant effect on NGO independence and financial sustainability, a large number of CSOs support the idea. Representatives of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour have publicly expressed the view that the existence of such a fund would ensure direct funding of NGOs in Lithuania and would strengthen their operational and financial capacities. Presumably, this is due to the fact that larger funding streams would be administered through centralised channels as opposed to the existing fragmented funding mechanisms.

However, the fund, according to one of the creators of the initial fund model, is only the first step towards developing NGO sustainability in Lithuania and is a prerequisite for further strengthening the NGO sector. Other steps may include professionalisation and capacity building of the sector that ensures the money given to NGOs is spent in an appropriate manner. Thus, even if the government fully implements this commitment, it would not instantaneously change the NGO sustainability situation.

One of the interviewed NGO sector representatives remarked that issues of NGO independence, impartiality on the part of fund administrators, and credibility can only be ensured by applying the highest transparency and accountability standards from the very beginning of the development of the fund.

The IRM researcher expects that the commitment will be completed by the end of the action plan implementation period in June 2016. However, NGOs will only fully benefit from the fund if a number of further steps are taken, such as developing the fund according to the model and structuring the fund with accountability and transparency in mind.

Moving Forward

The IRM researcher and the stakeholders interviewed recommend that the ministry release all relevant information and data to the public so that the development of the fund model is as transparent as possible. This would include divulging all fund models under consideration; releasing written inputs by all stakeholders; and publishing relevant studies, surveys, and statistics. Stakeholders suggest that the ministry should ensure the meaningful inclusion of NGO representatives into the fund model development and its further implementation.

In addition, the government should create an NGO definition that distinguishes non-profit organisations from businesses, other private interests associations, hospitals, and other entities that are not NGOs.

Lastly, once the fund is established, the government needs to introduce safeguard mechanisms, such as transparent evaluation procedures and supervisory functions to independent institutions. This will help ensure NGOs retain their independence when receiving funding from government.

¹ Minutes of the Committee of NGO matters, 15 October 2013, (Lit. NVO reikalų koordinavimo komisijos posėdžio protokolas) <http://bit.ly/1Sp4Bax>

² Interview (online) with Martinas Žaltauskas, NGOs Information and Support Centre, 22 September 2015

6: Accessibility of Public Information

Text of the commitment:

Initiative 3: Openness to the public of the activities of public administration authorities (Open Data)

Area: to make information held by public authorities accessible to the public

Actions:

1. To develop an **Open Data supply model**.
 - a. An Open Data supply model has been developed:
 - b. Guidelines for public administration authorities have been developed defining the Open Data concept, terms and conditions and methods for data opening;
 - c. Alternative ways for opening data have been presented.

2. To encourage data supply in **open formats**.
 - a. Recommendations have been developed for public institutions and agencies as regards the preparation of investment projects aimed at creation or modification of information systems; provisions have been made for the adjustment of information systems to provide data in open formats (.csm. xml, and others).
 - b. adjustment of information systems to provide data in open formats has been listed among investment priorities for 2015
[Emphasis added]

Responsible institution: Ministry of Transport and Communications

Supporting Institutions: not specified

Start date: not specified

End date: 2014

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance				Potential Impact				Completion			
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to information	Civic participation	Public accountability	Tech. and innov. for transparency and accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete
OVERALL			✓		✓					✓				✓		
6.1. Develop open data supply model			✓		✓					✓					✓	
6.2. Open formats			✓		✓					✓				✓		

What Happened?

This commitment aims to provide public information in the open data format, thus making it more accessible.

Currently, there is no functional open data portal in Lithuania. While a conversation among key stakeholders about the need of open data has been ongoing since 2010, the government has taken limited actions to develop and implement an open data supply model.

Milestone 6.1 is substantially completed. The Information Society Development Committee (ISDC) under the Ministry of Transport and Communications reported a number of outputs and commissioned a feasibility study in the beginning of 2015.¹ The study presents a detailed evaluation of two possible alternatives of an open data supply model: a metadata portal with centralised provision of open metadata when actual data is kept with separate institutions and a universal open data portal with centralised provision of metadata and of open data itself if chosen by institutions. The study recommended the second alternative, and the ISDC is considering it further.

In addition, the government updated the Law on Access to Information from National and Municipal Institutions, and the draft of the updated law should proceed to the parliament. The open data model was included with the legislation and supplemented with these two main provisions: all data not subject to legal release limitations should be published as open data and released data is subject to open licence (unrestricted reuse permission). It is not clear when parliament will approve the law or when the actual implementation of the supply model will start.

According to one of the ISDC officials, the committee does not regard open data guidelines as a stand-alone action. The ISDC is expected to extract the guidelines and practical tips from the feasibility study mentioned above² and will share the extracted and edited document with other institutions by the end of 2015. (Any update on this will be assessed at the end of the two-year action plan cycle.)

Milestone 6.2 shows limited progress.

While the Ministry of Communications and Transport did not start the commitment according to its strict wording, it did complete steps which have the same or even greater impact in the open data arena.

The ministry included the open data provision in the selection of investment projects in the area of information systems development or modification. This encourages institutions to ensure that newly developed or updated information systems have the functionality required to gather and release data in open formats. The IRM researcher has not been able to access any information regarding the use of this provision in practice.

Did It Matter?

The commitment is highly relevant to the OGP values as it deals directly with access to information and data in open formats. However, the implementation of the commitment, as it is worded, does not have a major impact on the access to open data in Lithuania. For one, the commitment does not specifically outline the provision of open data, and it also creates preconditions for the further provision of open data, significantly hindering its influence.

While the creation of an open data supply model is a positive and necessary step in the process, consultation rounds with stakeholders revealed that numerous concerns and shortcomings remain:

First and foremost, public institutions do not understand the benefits of open data. This could be the result of a lack of communication about open data by the Ministry of Transport and Communications, which is the responsible institution. There are currently no open data champions at public institutions.

Secondly, there is a lack of incentives for a number of prominent state institutions to release data. As an example, stakeholders mentioned the State Enterprise Centre of Registers (an organisation responsible for the administration of three main state registers – the Real Property Register and Cadastre, the Register of Legal Entities, and the Address Register) that legally charges for almost all datasets at its disposition.

Thirdly, governmental institutions suffer from a lack of technical capacity to gather and release data in open formats. It also suffers from a lack of interoperability and often creates separate and fragmented information systems at institutions. As a result, multiple institutions create systems that do not have the same data-sharing standards.

Finally, the state does not allocate any resources to encourage data reuse efforts and to showcase best practices. This leads to a situation where, according to the stakeholders consulted, there is not a strong demand for open data and the government is not encouraging data supply mechanisms.

The government scheduled the implementation of the outputs under this commitment in 2014. While there are a number of positive developments in this area, the actual provision of open data in a legally and technically sound environment will not happen until 2016 at the earliest.

Moving Forward

The IRM researcher recommends that future commitments in this area respond to the recommendations expressed by stakeholders by elaborating outputs and outcomes with measurable indicators.

In terms of further technical implementation of the open data supply model, stakeholders highly recommend the government to follow the recommendations set out in the feasibility study commissioned by ISDC.

Stakeholders recommend that the government proactively look for and appoint open data champions who would be responsible for open data processes and promotion in state institutions. More concrete steps could include the following:

- The government could release information in open formats that would be useful in building technical skills and capacities of state institutions. They could accomplish this by introducing multiple capacity-building resources for officials responsible for information and IT at public institutions. Capacity building can be done in multiple ways, including releasing standard guidelines, conducting trainings for officials, and establishing a contact point for advice and information at the Ministry of Transport and Communications;
- On top of infrastructure development, the government could allocate resources to encourage further reuse of released data by organizing, for instance, hack-a-thons and establishing incentives to reuse open government data;
- The government should continue to raise public awareness on the benefits of release and reuse of open data, especially emphasizing economic benefits;
- The government could introduce an interoperability requirement as a criterion for funding and approving information system development or modification projects; and
- The government could create a platform that gathers and shares information on data requested by various stakeholders.

¹ Feasibility study of open data in Lithuania, Price Waterhouse Coopers, Vilnius, 2015: <http://bit.ly/1QLGtjh>

² Feasibility study of open data in Lithuania, Price Waterhouse Coopers, Vilnius, 2015: <http://bit.ly/1QLGtjh>

7: Public Decision-Making Transparency

Text of the commitment:

Initiative 4: corruption prevention, transparency promotion

Area: To reduce the scale of corruption

Responsible authority: Ministry of Interior, Special Investigation Service

Action: to ensure publicity and transparency in public decision-making, enhance public access to draft legislation.

Expected outcome:

1. All **draft legislation is made public** (www.lrs.lt).
2. Reorganisation of the system of the authorities overseeing economic operators has reduced preconditions for corruption as a result of **lower administrative and supervisory burden**.
3. **Reduced motivation for illegal payments in the field of healthcare.**
4. **Improved procedures for the provision of administrative and public services** and for their administration by increasing the transparency and effectiveness of public services; improved system for civil servant selection, career, service, training and evaluation.
5. **Training of legislative drafters** on evaluation of draft legislation considering the aspect of anti-corruption, consultations given to legislation drafters on anti-corruption aspect in the evaluation of draft legislation.

[Emphasis added]

Responsible institution: Ministry of Interior, Special Investigation Service

Supporting institutions: Not specified

Start date: 2014

End date: 2016

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance				Potential Impact				Completion			
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to information	Civic participation	Public accountability	Tech. and innov. for transparency and accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete
OVERALL		✓			✓		✓			✓				✓		
7.1. Publicise draft legislation			✓		✓						✓				✓	
7.2. Lower administrative burden	✓						✓			✓					✓	
7.3. Reduce illegal payments in healthcare	✓						✓			✓				✓		

7.4. Improve service provision procedures		✓			✓						✓						✓
7.5. Training of legislative drafters			✓				✓				✓			✓			

What Happened?

This commitment aims to increase transparency in public decision-making processes and lists a range of outputs with widely varying degrees of specificity. The IRM researcher derived five milestones from the five expected outcomes listed in the commitment language. Progress on each of the milestones is reported below.

Milestone 7.1. This milestone, which is about making all draft legislation public, has been substantially implemented. On 1 January 2014, prior to the period of implementation covered by this report, the parliament ratified the Law on Legislative Framework. The law codified the duty of the legislature to publish all draft laws and to provide interested stakeholders with a venue to comment upon lawmaking within a reasonable timeframe. Currently, all existing laws since 1990 can be found in a newly created legislative database www.e-tar.lt. However, the database does not yet have a way for the public to provide input/comments on draft laws.

Milestone 7.2. This milestone, which aims to decrease corruption by simplifying administration, has also moved forward. The Special Investigation Service (SIS) developed a plan to consolidate business-monitoring authorities and to reorganise business-monitoring institutions. The plan aims to reduce the number of monitoring institutions, optimise distribution of monitoring functions, enhance the quality of monitoring, and adopt a consultative activity model of monitoring institutions as opposed to monitoring and sanctioning. A network of 17 monitoring institutions was established with the aim of knowledge sharing and coordination. The SIS assumes that the following measures reduce opportunities for bribery:

- 71% of all monitoring actions are conducted through standardised questionnaires;
- 14 institutions provide general business consultations through recorded phone conversations; and
- 47 institutions declared their intent not to apply any sanctioning measures to business organisations during their first year of existence and, instead, focus on consulting them.

Milestone 7.3. The milestone to reduce illegal payments in the health sector has a limited completion rate. The Ministry of Health reports that it has standardised the package of information provided to patients at healthcare institutions via on-screen digital advertising, flyers, etc. and that it has introduced a code of ethics at healthcare institutions. It also conducted a series of anti-corruption trainings and seminars in 2014-2015 for more than 1,300 healthcare professionals and around 250 directors.

Milestone 7.4. This milestone, which aims to improve public service provision procedures, has made substantial progress. On 2 July 2014, the government issued a decree to increase the number of administrative services provided online. As an immediate result, the government moved eight business-oriented services specified in the decree and eight citizen-oriented services online. In addition, the government amended the Law on Local Governance to impose a duty on municipal institutions to

create anti-corruption commissions within their structures. Lastly, the government also amended the Law on Access to Information to impose a duty on public institutions to publish all confirmed misconducts in office and related sanctions as well as information on incentives awarded to civil servants.

Milestone 7.5. This milestone, which aims to train legislative drafters, has not started. In May 2014 prior to the implementation of the action plan, the government issued the Government Decree on Civil Servants' Training Strategy 2014-2017, which imposed a duty on all employees and civil servants of municipal and national public institutions to complete a course on anti-corruption. The courses on anti-corruption will be held, at the least, every year and, at the most, every quarter. The courses will be organised and conducted by institutions themselves in close cooperation with the Special Investigation Service. However, the responsible authority did not report any quantitative results showing that any of these trainings occurred.

Did It Matter?

The commitment's language is vague, and it lists a range of outputs without outlining a clear path to achieving them, making it hard to assess the potential impact of this commitment. It is also not clear how these different outcomes relate to the main goal of the commitment, which is to ensure publicity and transparency in public decision making and to enhance public access to draft legislation.

In the self-assessment report, the government reported a number of achievements many of which can be assessed positively. Stakeholders think that creating a legislative database is a positive development. The database is fully functional and user friendly, allowing for a general or very detailed search. However, the IRM researcher noted that one of the database's goals was to increase public participation in legislative processes, but the database does not allow citizens or organisations to contribute to lawmaking. It does not have a separate window for exploring which projects are open for submission nor does it provide any record of legislative consultations with stakeholders. In addition, according to one of the leading anti-corruption NGOs in the country,¹ while the need for transparency in lobbying is evident, the published laws provide very limited information about those who contributed to the law or had any other influence over them. This information should be published together with all enacted laws in Lithuania.

The effort to consolidate business monitoring agencies and their services seems to have at least partially contributed to an improved environment for those starting a business in Lithuania. With regards to reduction of corruption, implementing agency assumes that digitalisation and consolidation of services may reduce opportunities for abuse of discretionary power (when issuing certificates, documents, etc.) at multiple institutions. Lithuania has significantly improved in the Doing Business Index's *Starting a Business* category and in 2015 ranks eleventh – up from nineteenth in 2014. With three required procedures on average, three-and-a-half days, and 0.7% of income-per-capita costs to start a business, Lithuania is well above average not only in the context of European and Central Asian countries but also Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries². Faster turnaround time to receive service and simpler procedures help reduce corruption.

One of the key corruption-related problems in the healthcare sector is petty bribery. There is a custom to "thank a doctor" with an informal payment or a gift. Awareness-raising campaigns are trying to change this custom. While the healthcare sector remains the most corrupt sector in Lithuania, patients have been experiencing less corruption, according to public services. In 2011, 31% of patients either paid informal payments or gave a gift to a doctor. In 2014 that number went down to 22%. However, according to a representative of one of the NGOs working in the anti-corruption field³, the Ministry of

Health Security does not demonstrate sufficient political will to meaningfully reduce petty corruption in the Lithuanian healthcare sector.

Most stakeholders welcomed the idea of digitalising the public services as a way to reduce opportunities for petty bribery. Services, such as the electronic doctor appointment scheduling system and the e-receipt or electronic personal health card, would help reduce bribery by limiting face-to-face interactions.

Regarding anti-corruption commissions, the Special Investigation Service did not publish any information about how many of these commissions have been created. In addition, the IRM researcher did not find any published activity about the commissions or indications that these commissions had been successful. This makes it difficult to judge if they achieved their desired objectives.

The Special Investigation Service did not distinguish between trainings for municipal and national level officials. However, its annual report states that in 2014 it organised 105 trainings in municipal and national institutions directly targeting almost 4,000 officials.

According to one of the NGO representatives who was invited to present during a number of municipal trainings, it is difficult to judge the effectiveness of these trainings as municipal officials are under an imposed duty to attend them. There is a sense that often municipalities conduct these trainings in order to "tick a box."

Moving Forward

The IRM researcher recommends that future commitments should define a clear focus and identify clear activities for meaningful involvement of citizens in legislative processes using ICT solutions (by creating a single channel, for instance).

Stakeholders suggest that it would be more beneficial if OGP commitments could focus on promoting transparency and accountability of healthcare institutions in Lithuania by publishing all possible information and data (service charges, budget, expenditures, etc.) online. The Ministry of Health could install ICT solutions in the appropriate areas of healthcare, such as electronic appointment scheduling, e-health cards, and e-receipts.

To improve the transparency of the legislative drafting, stakeholders recommend the parliament and other institutions publish information related to the legislative footprints (e.g., disclose names of individuals and institutions that lobbied or contributed to the development of laws) of all enacted or proposed legislation.

¹ Interview with a representative from Transparency International Lithuanian Chapter, 15 September 2015

² "Ease of Doing Business in Lithuania," World Bank Group. 2016. Web.
<http://www.doingbusiness.org/data/exploreeconomies/lithuania/>

³ Interview with Rūta Mrazauskaitė, Transparency International Lithuanian Chapter, 2015 October 12

8: Promoting Anti-Corruption Education

Text of the commitment:

Initiative 4: corruption prevention, transparency promotion

Area: To reduce the scale of corruption

Action (milestone): to promote anti-corruption education by employing mass media and other means.

Expected outcome:

1. **Increased public intolerance to corruption, and public involvement in anti-corruption has been encouraged; anticorruption education programmes have been developed and implemented.**
2. *Delining share of population thinking corruption is widespread according to Special Eurobarometer (in 2014 – 95 %, in 2015 – 94%, 2016 – 93%).*
3. *Growing Transparency International Corruption Perception Index (in 2013 – 57, in 2014 – 58, in 2015 – 59, in 2016 - 60).*
4. **Anti-corruption initiative “Clean hands” has been carried across health institutions in Lithuania (Ministry of Health, Q2/2014).**

[emphasis added]

Responsible institution: Ministries

Supporting institutions: Not specified

Start date: 2014

End date: 2016

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance				Potential Impact				Completion			
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to information	Civic participation	Public accountability	Tech. and innov. for transparency and accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete
OVERALL		✓			✓		✓			✓					✓	
8.1. Develop anti-corruption education programmes			✓		✓		✓			✓					✓	
8.2. “Clean Hands” initiative		✓					✓			✓						✓

What Happened?

This commitment aims to promote anti-corruption education through the use of media. The IRM researcher derived two measurable milestones from the language of the commitments: to develop an anti-corruption education programme and to carry out the “Clean Hands” initiative. Milestones two and three are indicators rather than activities for the fulfillment of commitment goals. Therefore, they have not been assessed by the IRM researcher.

Milestone 8.1. The milestone to develop an anti-corruption education programme has been substantially completed. The Special Investigation Service (SIS) reported that the system of informing officials on potential repercussions of corruption has been introduced in ministries and institutions under the agency's control. In addition, the SIS organises anti-corruption courses to all municipal and national institutions. The national television and radio stations air programmes about anti-corruption regularly. The IRM researcher did not find any evidence indicating the outreach or regularity of these campaigns. However, the IRM researcher found a number of fragmented campaign outputs on the online media portals. This includes prominent portals with a monthly traffic of a third of the Lithuanian population (banners and invitations to report corruption in corruption-related media articles, for instance).

Also, the SIS reported that anti-corruption education has been integrated into secondary and high education institutions. However, that integration, as perceived by the Special Investigation Service, existed before the development of the action plan, so this output can hardly be attributed to the OGP action plan. The IRM researcher found that the integration is limited to the provision of teaching materials and occasional awareness-raising activities, such as essay competitions, etc. A representative of one of the anti-corruption NGOs noted that anti-corruption education strategies applied by the SIS and the Ministry of Education and Science were largely ineffective mainly because the agencies don't have a systemic approach to anti-corruption education. Cheating levels at schools and the perception of corruption indicate the need for alternative methods. (There is an established correlation between an individual's will to cheat at school and his/her preparedness to engage in corrupt activities further in his/her career¹).

Milestone 8.2. The scope of this commitment is unclear. Since the Ministry did not specify the number of public health institutions that should carry the Clean Hands initiative, the IRM researcher has presumed that the initiative concerns the 21 healthcare institutions that are under the ministry's jurisdiction. The Ministry of Health reported to have conducted the "Clean Hands" initiative in the second quarter of 2014. The essence of the initiative was to rank 21 healthcare institutions in Lithuania (out of more than 1,700 healthcare institutions in Lithuania) according to their anti-corruption index. The index was calculated according to these key criteria: (1) amount of information presented to patients at healthcare institutions (information about whistleblowing opportunities, the head of the institution's position on anti-corruption, and other types of information on screens, leaflets, etc.); (2) conducting seminars/trainings on ethics/anti-corruption at healthcare institutions; (3) availability of interest declarations of heads of institutions; and (4) anonymous surveys of staff and patients.

The Ministry of Health did not provide any information indicating its intention to sustain the initiative or to expand the scope of it to more healthcare institutions in Lithuania.

Did It Matter?

Anti-corruption education can play an important role in raising awareness on the damaging effects of corruption and in creating a culture of integrity. While there are positive developments in the field of anti-corruption in Lithuania, the action and expected outcomes outlined in this commitment do not seem to significantly affect the levels of anti-corruption education in Lithuania, nor did they meaningfully affect corruption perception levels. Therefore, the potential impact is minor.

According to the Eurobarometer survey referenced in the commitment, 95% of Lithuanians believe that corruption is widespread in the country, although that perception has been decreasing. According to the Lithuanian Map of Corruption 2011, 40% of business representatives, 57% of residents, and 35% of public officials said they were ready to bribe. In 2014, the Map of Corruption shows that there are 21% of

business representatives, 48% of residents, and 23% of public officials who are ready to bribe.

Anti-corruption education is one of the strategic activity areas of SIS. However, the scarce budget of the SIS only allocates a small amount to youth anti-corruption education. In addition, anti-corruption education is hardly integrated into education programmes of primary and secondary schools. A representative of Transparency International remarked that while anti-corruption education is necessary, it can only be truly effective in reducing corruption levels if combined with other methods on other levels of state and municipal governance.

A representative of the Civil Society Institute remarked, that it is essential to promote anticorruption education in multiple spheres of children's lives. First of all, the culture of integrity at schools should be fostered with attention being paid to teaching civic skills required to participate in public life at later stages in life.

With regards to the "Clean Hands" initiative at healthcare institutions, a representative of Transparency International Lithuania remarked that the idea to initiate a competition among healthcare institutions based on their anti-corruption performance is a positive development. However, the narrow scope of the initiative (it covered twenty-one institutions out of more than 1,700 healthcare institutions in Lithuania) and the lack of clarity as to the sustainability of the initiative raises questions about the will of the Ministry of Health to further promote anti-corruption in the healthcare sector.

As indicated by a number of interviews with stakeholders, there are numerous concerns regarding corruption prone areas:

There is a lack of transparency and accountability in the public procurement system. According to Lithuanian business representatives, corruption is among the top five obstacles to doing business in Lithuania. Also, the lobbying regulation in Lithuania is not functioning. Government should consider broadening the definition of lobbyist, ensuring robust completion of the lobby register, and ensuring the timely release of all related data in open formats.

There is a lack of transparency in the field of political party financing. The parties do not publish their financing information in a timely way, and the publications are burdensome in terms of data formats and structures. Lastly, there is a lack of transparency in the disclosure of interest declarations. The interest declaration is an official document that contains a list of interests declared by a politician that dictate his/her conduct in a possible conflict of interest situation. The current release of interest declaration data is burdensome to users and does not conform to open data standards.

While it is a positive development that the government includes anti-corruption efforts into the OGP action plan, those efforts remain limited in scope and do not demonstrate a systemic approach to anti-corruption. In order to reduce the perception of corruption, which is the aim of the government in the current OGP action plan, it has to tackle a wider range of tangible issues, including, but not limited to, the fields mentioned above.

Moving Forward

The IRM researcher recommends that future commitments in the area of anti-corruption education focus on addressing sectors most prone to corruption and are, therefore, most relevant to stakeholders. For the stakeholders to be able to track progress, commitments should contain clear objectives and milestones, with measurable outcome indicators.

In order to decrease the corruption perception levels, stakeholders believe that the government should step up its efforts to fight corruption. In particular, they recommend

strengthening the integrity of the public procurement system to ensure its transparency and accountability; reviewing the regulation of lobbying and ensuring transparency in lobbying activities; enhancing the transparency of political party financing; and reforming the Chief Official Ethics Commission's data and information release methods by adopting open data release standards.

¹ Dan Ariely, *The (Honest) Truth About Dishonesty* (Durham, NC, Duke University, 2012).

V. Process: Self-Assessment

While the government did release the self-assessment report on time, it did not provide the OGP-mandated, two-week comment period on the report. The report is not available in Lithuanian, preventing many Lithuanian citizens from monitoring OGP progress in the country.

Table 2: Self-Assessment Checklist

Was the annual progress report published?	Y
Was it done according to schedule?	Y
Is the report available in the administrative language(s)?	N
Is the report available in English?	Y
Did the government provide a two-week, public comment period on draft self-assessment reports?	N
Were any public comments received?	N/A
Is the report deposited in the OGP portal?	Y
Did the self-assessment report include review of consultation efforts during action plan development?	Y
Did the self-assessment report include review of consultation efforts during action plan implementation?	Y
Did the self-assessment report include a description of the public comment period during the development of the self-assessment?	N
Did the report cover all of the commitments?	Y
Did it assess completion of each commitment according to the timeline and milestones in the action plan?	Y
Did the report respond to the IRM key recommendations (2015+ only)?	N/A

While the government prepared and published the according to schedule, there were notable shortcomings regarding the process of self-assessment development and its publicity. The government did not provide any comment period on the draft self-assessment report. While the report is available on the OGP website, the government did not publish the report on its website nor is it available in the administrative language. Because the report was not produced in the administrative language, it means only an elite group of NGOs are able to monitor progress. From conversations with government officials, it is unclear why the report was not published in Lithuanian or whether it will

be translated. However, the report covers all the commitments and is quite detailed in explaining outputs within each commitment.

VI. Country Context

This section places the action plan commitments in the broader national context of open government. The process of Lithuania's accession to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the changes this process might bring to the country are discussed in this section.

Lithuania has number of clear political processes and opportunities that can allow it to advance governance. The next OGP action plan can be used to complement and accelerate these opportunities.

Lithuania is currently in the process of integration to the OECD. In July 2015, the 34 OECD members adopted the Roadmap for the Accession of Lithuania to the OECD Convention, which set out the terms, conditions, and processes for its accession. ¹

As part of the accession process, the OECD will evaluate Lithuania's implementation of the organisation's policies, practices, and legal instruments. Lithuania is currently working with the OECD committees to (among other issues) reform the public governance to work towards "transparency and accountability to promote and facilitate responsibility for government action and inclusive stakeholder engagement in policy design and implementation."² This offers momentum for a wider recognition of OGP in Lithuania as goals and values of OGP are fully in line with the integration to the OECD requirements. Many of the commitments in the current action plan were also found in public governance reform, which are strategic documents drafted in accordance to the OECD recommendations.

On another note, the municipality of Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, witnessed an increase in government openness champions at public institutions. In particular, the newly elected Mayor of Vilnius in 2015 appointed an adviser on open data and the adviser has demonstrated a willingness to open up large amounts of transparency-relevant data and information. Although the impact of his work has yet to be evaluated, it is the first time in Lithuania that an institution has an official position specifically devoted to openness & technology issues.

In addition, there were a number of relevant civic initiatives in Lithuania that attracted public attention. Transparency International Lithuanian Chapter created numerous tools that people use on a daily basis, such as a media ownership platform www.stirna.info; a parliamentary monitoring website www.manoseimas.lt; and a judiciary openness platform www.atvirasteismas, and it demonstrated a business case for the release and reuse of open data. An initiative against shadow economy www.beseselio.lt has also been gaining popularity. Also, there is another larger-scale initiative worth noting, www.freedata.lt, that uses a wide range of open datasets to present important insights to the larger communities in Lithuania. All these initiatives contribute to promoting the use of open data and encouraging access to information, interest in government processes, and participation in public policy. This supports at least two commitments in the current action plan - encouraging the release of open data and promoting civic participation.

However, it is also important to mention a few outstanding negative developments in Lithuania.

Corruption in Lithuania remains widespread. Lithuania ranks thirty-ninth in the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index – twentieth out of all EU states. According to the Lithuanian Map of Corruption 2014³, 67% of Lithuanians perceive corruption to be a serious detriment to quality of life, and 75% of Lithuanians believe that bribery is widespread. While promoting anti-corruption education and other anti-

corruption commitments in the current plan is a positive step, the government should approach the issue in a more complex and creative manner by promoting transparency and accountability in all spheres of public life. The next OGP action plan could include a more holistic approach to reducing corruption levels in Lithuania, putting particular focus on releasing data that is crucial to monitoring government performance.

A lack of transparency in public finance management and the inability of civil society to monitor public expenditures often result in budget scandals. In addition, the lack of transparency in the shaping of state budgets results in low public trust in the process. Often the government fails to explain to the Lithuanian public the reasons behind choosing certain strategic areas to finance over others.

Although there are no qualitative or quantitative data to support it, there is an apparent and dominant view that the Lithuanian government has an overly bureaucratic approach to governance. This is somewhat mirrored in the OECD Public Governance Review that suggests that the Lithuanian government does not sufficiently use performance data to improve public governance.

The key findings and recommendations of the OECD Public Governance Review of Lithuania suggest three main points for the government to address:

- “Enhance the discussion on open government across government agencies and with non-state actors in order to develop a shared vision;
- Strengthen the strategic use of performance data; and
- Provide visibility across government and towards citizens of existing open government good practices and institutional champions.”⁴

The major challenge identified by the report is for the government to move beyond the current approach, which is based on compliance with legal requirements and procedures, and rather focus on achieving impact. It is important for the government to develop outcome and impact indicators and to use them in a proactive manner.

Stakeholder Priorities

Taking into account the four initiatives that the Office of the Government included in the action plan, it is fair to conclude that with regards to the provision of e-services, Lithuania is on a positive track – even with notable shortcomings. However, when it comes to taking meaningful steps to release substantial amounts of open data or to demonstrate a firmer stand against various forms of corruption, the government still needs to complete numerous strategic actions. These two areas were a common theme in multiple stakeholder interviews.

Many stakeholders said there was a need for the Centre of Registers to make information easily accessible to the public and to provide information for free.

In addition, many stakeholders recognised a lack of openness in the culture of public institutions. While the government has put much effort into building ICT infrastructures and many other developments, the government regarded building a culture of transparency and accountability as an organic process that does not require targeted efforts. It is important to build a culture of openness by showcasing its benefits to public officials. The government could accomplish this by organising forums to discuss open government, providing officials with best practices from other countries, or encouraging heads of institutions to promote openness.

Lastly, current strategic governance documents as well as the OGP action plan are missing the issues of corporate transparency and transparency in beneficial ownership. In the light of the geopolitical climate in the region combined with continuous

integration to the global community, the issues of corporate transparency and transparency of beneficial ownership seem like vital topics for the government in the near future. Civil society needs to be better equipped to monitor influential companies and to track their origins in Lithuania. For instance, Transparency International Lithuanian Chapter (www.stirna.info) developed a web-based platform that monitors media ownership. The platform demonstrated that civil society is interested in tracking beneficial ownership of large media companies. Transparency in beneficial ownership would also provide civil society with real opportunities to monitor how public funds are distributed in Lithuania.

Scope of Action Plan in Relation to National Context

As might be seen from the sections above, to further promote public transparency, accountability, civic participation, and the use of innovations in public governance, the government of Lithuania may consider expanding the OGP activities to a number of other fields that affect open government:

- The government could promote lobbying transparency by revisiting regulations and promoting openness of law making. Currently, despite occasional initiatives looking into lobbying activities by civil society or investigative journalists, it is practically impossible to understand what organisations and individuals stand behind legislation in Lithuania. The next OGP action plan could address the issue by committing to disclose legislative footprint, revisiting lobbying legislation in Lithuania, and promoting transparency within the lobby register (disclosing information in accordance to open data standards).
- The government could promote transparency in corporate beneficial ownership. Currently the information about beneficial ownership is not accessible in open formats. This makes it hard for NGOs and civil society to monitor corporations and identify possible connections between entities. This may affect efforts to fight money laundering or to curb conflicts of interest. The next OGP action plan could address the issue by committing to disclose beneficial ownership information by appropriate institutions (for instance, the Centre of Registers or the Ministry of the Interior) in accordance to open data standards.
- The government could promote transparency in the system of official interest declaration and the timely release of information. Currently, monitoring possible conflicts of interest is burdensome because there is no access to data on interest declarations in bulk and in open formats. Monitoring possible conflicts of interest in Lithuania – a country of fewer than three million people, which brings a high risk of nepotism, cronyism, clientelism, etc. – is particularly important in reducing opportunities for corruption. The next OGP action plan could address this issue by committing to disclose all interest and asset declarations by the Chief Official Ethics Commission and/or the Central Electoral Commission in accordance to open data standards.
- The government could promote accountability in political party financing mechanisms and the timely release of information. Currently, it is difficult for the general public to monitor who gives money to political parties, making it almost impossible for average people to see what interests those parties may represent. The next OGP action plan could address this issue by having the Central Electoral Commission commit to releasing all financing-related information in accordance with open data standards.

¹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. *Roadmap for the Accession of Lithuania to the OECD Convention*. 13 July 2015. Web. <http://www.oecd.org/newsroom/oecd-establishes-roadmap-for-membership-with-lithuania.htm>

² Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. *Roadmap for the Accession of Lithuania to the OECD Convention*. 13 July 2015. Web. <http://bit.ly/1nTII87>

³ Lithuanian Map of Corruption 2014: http://www.stt.lt/documents/soc_tyrimai/Gyventojai_BENDRAS.pdf

⁴ Lithuania: Fostering Open and Inclusive Policy Making, OECD Public Policy Reviews, 2014: <http://bit.ly/1nWAwUD>

VII. General Recommendations

This section recommends general next steps for Lithuania’s OGP process in general, rather than for specific commitments. These recommendations come from the commitment evaluations above, stakeholder consultations, and the IRM researcher’s analysis of the process of developing and implementing the section action plan.

First and foremost, the Office of the Government may consider taking steps to ensure that the OGP action plan reflects the interests of as many stakeholders in Lithuania as possible. It is important to ensure that the development of the next OGP action plan is a collaborative process involving civil society representatives and other interested parties. Drawing on the experience of other OGP countries, the establishment of a multi-stakeholder forum is an integral part of this process. The forum, which would meet on a regular basis to work on the development and implementation of the action plan, could be composed of and co-chaired by representatives of civil society, the private sector, implementing agencies, and other institutions.

Secondly, the Office of the Government may consider explaining to all stakeholders what the values, goals, and benefits of OGP are in order to generate broader interest in OGP. In particular, the government could emphasise the fact that OGP is an opportunity to implement citizen-centred initiatives in quick two-year cycles. The government could also mention that OGP showcases innovative open government reforms globally and presents an opportunity to learn from the experiences of other participating countries.

Thirdly, the drafting of the action plan could follow a basic structure of strategic planning document (inputs/outputs/outcomes/impacts) as well as SMART goal formulation techniques.

Finally, all agencies involved in the implementation of the OGP action plan may consider educating their employees so that there is a shared understanding of the values and goals of OGP.

Top SMART Recommendations

<i>TOP FIVE ‘SMART’ RECOMMENDATIONS</i>
Ensure the development of the next action plan is done in accordance with the recommendations of OGP and includes a wide range of stakeholders in the process, both during the development and the implementation of the OGP action plan.
Review and amend the lobbying regulations in Lithuania with the aim to expand the definition of lobbying, to achieve effective use of the lobby register, and to enhance transparency of lobbying by releasing all relevant data in open formats.
Create legal and technical guidelines for enhancing transparency in the beneficial ownership of companies registered or operating in Lithuania.
Ensure access to all official interest and asset disclosure declarations through a centralised online channel and in accordance with open data standards and encourage relevant data release in open formats.
Ensure timely access to political party financial data through a centralised online channel in accordance with open data standards.

VIII. Methodology and Sources

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

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

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

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

Interviews and Focus Groups

Each national researcher will carry out at least one public information-gathering event. Care should be taken in inviting stakeholders outside of the “usual suspects” list of invitees already participating in existing processes. Supplementary means may be needed to gather the inputs of stakeholders in a more meaningful way (e.g., online surveys, written responses, follow-up interviews). Additionally, researchers perform specific interviews with responsible agencies when the commitments require more information than is provided in the self-assessment or is accessible online.

When selecting national level stakeholders, the IRM researcher used the following criteria:

- Demonstrates knowledge of the subject matter;
- Currently or recently active in the fields concerned;
- Lack of presumed direct interest in outcomes of the IRM report (objectivity); and
- Has a good reputation.

While there are limited choices of highly knowledgeable and reputable professionals in the fields concerned in Lithuania (with a population of fewer than 3 million), the IRM researcher aimed to include individuals from a wide range of backgrounds.

The IRM researcher conducted 20 in-person interviews. Those individuals are:

Ieva Petronytė, The Civil Society Institute, Director;
Rūta Mrazauskaitė, Transparency International Lithuanian Chapter, Project Manager;
Rugilė Trumpytė, Transparency International Lithuanian Chapter, Project Manager;
Ričardas Ališauskas, Ministry of Education and Science, Head of Department;

Rineta Raudienė, Adolfo Jucio Secondary School, Plungė, Teacher;
Rytis Kalinauskas, Information Society Development Committee, Deputy Director;
Kęstutis Andrijauskas, Information Society Development Committee, Head of Department;
Martinas Žaltauskas, NGOs Information and Support Centre, Director;
Mantas Zimnickas, UAB Programmers of Vilnius, Programmer;
Šarūnas Legeckas, Placellive.com, CEO;
Živilė Stubrytė, NEWSEC, Compliance Manager;
Tomas Krilavičius, Vytautas Magnus University, Lecturer;
Tomas Straupis, Developer;
Irmantas Zakarackas, Gaming Control Authority under the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Lithuania, Senior Specialist;
Povilas Poderskis, Vilnius Municipality, Mayoral Adviser;
Audrius Leipus, PricewaterhouseCoopers Lithuania, Senior Manager;
Andrius Balčiūnas, Vilnius University, Lecturer
Gitana Jurjonienė, The Ministry of the Interior, Adviser;
Marija Bartaševičiūtė, Vilnius Naujamiestis administrative unit, Local representative;
Agnė Markauskaitė, Civil Society Institute, Project Expert;
Juratė Guzevičiūtė, Human Rights Monitoring Institute, Legal Director.

In addition, one stakeholder meeting was held on 28 September 2015. Eight individuals, including online participants, from the public and private sectors and academia attended the meeting. The meeting was held in a focus group format.

Please add a short summary of the main results on this stakeholder meeting – what was discussed and what recommendations were made.

The meeting focused on the progress of current commitments and the priorities for the next round of the process. The group discussion was largely about issues related to openness in general with a specific focus on the technology around openness, such as open government data and e-services. The group gathered both OGP-aware and non-aware stakeholders from business and civil society. The profile of the group largely reflected the civic technology community in Lithuania. Thus, the majority of comments and recommendations focused on ways to make government data more accessible and on broader issues of access to information. Those unable to join the discussion physically were invited to participate online. Only a few of the stakeholders used this option. The IRM researcher conducted additional interviews with business and public sector stakeholders.

About the Independent Reporting Mechanism

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

The current membership of the International Experts' Panel is:

- Anuradha Joshi
- Debbie Budlender
- Ernesto Velasco-Sánchez
- Gerardo Munck
- Hazel Feigenblatt
- Hille Hinsberg
- Jonathan Fox

- Liliâne Corrêa de Oliveira Klaus
- Rosemary McGee
- Yamini Aiyar

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

¹ Full research guidance can be found in the IRM Procedures Manual, available at: <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/about/about-irm>

IX. Eligibility Requirements Annex

In September 2012, OGP decided to begin strongly encouraging participating governments to adopt ambitious commitments in relation to their performance with respect to the OGP eligibility criteria.

The OGP Support Unit collates eligibility criteria on an annual basis. These scores are presented below.¹ When appropriate, the IRM reports will discuss the context surrounding progress or regress on specific criteria in the Country Context section.

Criteria	2011	Current	Change	Explanation
Budget transparency ²	ND	ND	=	4 = Executive's Budget Proposal and Audit Report published 2 = One of two published 0 = Neither published
Access to information ³	4	4	=	4 = Access to information (ATI) Law 3 = Constitutional ATI provision 1 = Draft ATI law 0 = No ATI law
Asset Declaration ⁴	4	4	=	4 = Asset disclosure law, data public 2 = Asset disclosure law, no public data 0 = No law
Citizen Engagement (Raw score)	4 (9.12) ⁵	4 (9.71) ⁶	=	EIU Citizen Engagement Index raw score: 1 > 0 2 > 2.5 3 > 5 4 > 7.5
Total / Possible (Percent)	12/12 (100%)	12/12 (100%)	=	75% of possible points to be eligible

¹ For more information, see <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/how-it-works/eligibility-criteria>

² For more information, see Table 1 in <http://internationalbudget.org/what-we-do/open-budget-survey/>; For up-to-date assessments, see <http://www.obstracker.org/>

³ The two databases used are Constitutional Provisions at <http://www.right2info.org/constitutional-protections> and Laws and draft laws <http://www.right2info.org/access-to-information-laws>

⁴ Simeon Djankov, Rafael La Porta, Florencio Lopez-de-Silanes, and Andrei Shleifer, "Disclosure by Politicians," (Tuck School of Business Working Paper 2009-60, 2009): [://bit.ly/19nDEFK](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). [://bit.ly/13vGtqS](http://bit.ly/13vGtqS); Ricard Messick, "Income and Asset Disclosure by World Bank Client Countries" (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2009). [://bit.ly/1clokyf](http://bit.ly/1clokyf); For more recent information, see <http://publicofficialsfinancialdisclosure.worldbank.org>. In 2014, the OGP Steering Committee approved a change in the asset disclosure measurement. The existence of a law and *de facto* public access to the disclosed information replaced the old measures of disclosure by politicians and disclosure of high-level officials. For additional information, see the guidance note on 2014 OGP Eligibility Requirements at <http://bit.ly/1EjLj4Y>

⁵ Economist Intelligence Unit, "Democracy Index 2010: Democracy in Retreat" (London: Economist, 2010). Available at: [://bit.ly/eLC1rE](http://bit.ly/eLC1rE)

⁶ Economist Intelligence Unit, "Democracy Index 2014: Democracy and its Discontents" (London: Economist, 2014). Available at: <http://bit.ly/18kEzCt>