Albania has made progress implementing commitments in the fight against corruption. The government launched the portal for reporting corruption, and the Parliament passed the Whistleblower Protection Law. At the end of the action plan, a number of commitments remained limited in completion, and some improvements led to a marginal increase in access to information. To improve Albania's performance in OGP, government and civil society can take advantage of the multi-stakeholder forum, established in March 2016, to monitor progress of commitments.

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 review of the activities of each OGP participating country. This report summarizes the results from July 2014 to June 2016 and includes relevant developments up to September 2016.

The Ministry of State for Innovation and Public Administration (MSIPA) is the lead institution coordinating OGP in Albania. The Inter-Ministerial Working Group (IWG), lead by MSIPA, is responsible for the development and implementation of the action plan, and only representatives from government agencies are members. An informal multi-stakeholder forum—"OpenAlb," which is composed of representatives from civil society and central government institutions (IWG members)—has been in place since March 2016. OpenAlb aims to provide a regular forum for government, civil society organizations (CSOs), and other stakeholders to review the OGP process and take action. This multi-stakeholder forum has been particularly active in the design and consultations for the third OGP action plan.

In July 2016, Albania submitted its third OGP action plan 2016–2018 and in October 2016 published the end-of-term self-assessment report on implementation of the OGP 2014–2016 action plan.

Two commitments on e-Albania and the Whistleblower Protection Law were carried forward to the 2016–2018 action plan. Two other commitments on the electronic registry of permits and the promotion of OGP values with local governments were partially carried forward. Elements of these commitments are reflected in the new commitment on open standards for contracting and the publication of local government legislation in open systems.

Table 1: At a Glance	Mid-term	End-of-term
Number of commitments	13	
Level of completion		
Completed	0	2
Substantial	5	4
Limited	7	7
Not started	1	0
Number of commitments with:		
Clear relevance to OGP values	9	
Transformative potential impact	1	
Substantial or complete implementation	5	6
All three (⊘)	0	1
Did it open government	*Major*	0
	Outstanding	0
Moving forward		
Number of commitments carried over to next action plan	2	

This report was prepared by Gjergji Vurmo

Consultation with civil society during implementation

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

Compared to the 2012–2013 action plan cycle, the development process of the 2014–2016 cycle has improved significantly. The CSO Coalition for OGP Albania, formed in December 2013, assumed a leading role in holding participatory consultations for the design of 2014–2016 action plan. However, the coalition was less active during the action plan implementation. The Ministry of State for Innovation and Public Administration (MSIPA) maintained an open channel of communication and exchange with interested CSOs. Government-to-government meetings remain closed, civil society organizations were not invited to IWG's meetings, and there were no regular meetings with CSOs until early 2016. Interactions between government and civil society (mostly members of the CSO Coalition for OGP Albania) resumed in the beginning of 2016 and focused mostly on the establishment of the multi-stakeholder forum, OpenAlb, as well as on the consultations for the third action plan (2016–2018).[1] A joint event hosted by MSIPA and the OpenAlb forum was scheduled for October 2016. The purpose of the public event was to launch the third OGP action plan, discuss the next steps in its implementation, and learn from the previous action plan's implementation.

Table 2: Action Plan Consultation Process

Phase of Action Plan	OGP Process Requirement (Articles of Governance Section)	Did the Government Meet this Requirement?
During implementation	Regular forum for consultation during implementation?	No
	Consultations: Open or invitation only?	N/A
	Consultations on IAP2 spectrum[2]	N/A

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[1] The OpenAlb multi-stakeholder forum consists of government representatives and civil society members working on OGP Albania, predominantly members of the CSOs Coalition for OGP Albania. It covered civil society development issues, good governance, the environment, open data, investigative journalism, etc. Source: Document review of OpenAlb MS Forum and an interview with Artela Mitrushi, OpenAlb—IDM.

[2] "IAP2 Spectrum of Political Participation," International Association for Public Participation, http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/Foundations_Course/IAP2_P2_Spectrum.pdf

This report was prepared by Gjergji Vurmo

Progress in commitment implementation

All of the indicators and the method 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:

- It must be specific enough that a judgment can be made about its potential impact. Starred commitments will have "medium" or "high" specificity.
- 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.
- The commitment would have a "transformative" potential impact if completely implemented.
- 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 at the midterm, Albania's action plan contained 0 starred commitments. At the end of term, based on the changes in the level of completion, Albania's action plan contained 1 starred commitment (Commitment 4.1. on the adoption of the Whistleblower Protection Law).

Commitments assessed as starred commitments in the midterm report can lose their starred status if their completion falls short of substantial or full completion at the end of the action plan implementation cycle, which would mean they have an overall limited completion at the end of term, per commitment language.

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 Albania, see the OGP Explorer at www.opengovpartnership.org/explorer.

About "Did it Open Government?"

Often, OGP commitments are vaguely worded or not clearly related to opening government, but they actually achieve significant political reforms. Other times, commitments with significant progress may appear relevant and ambitious but fail to open government. In an attempt to capture these subtleties and, more importantly, actual changes in government practice, the IRM introduced a new variable—"did it open government?"—in end-of-term reports. This variable attempts to move beyond measuring outputs and deliverables to looking at how government practice has changed as a result of the commitment's implementation. This can be contrasted to the IRM's "starred commitments" which describe *potential* impact.

IRM researchers assess the "did it open government?" question with regard to each of the OGP values that pertain to the commitment. It asks, did it stretch the government practice beyond business as usual? The scale for assessment is as follows:

- Worsened: Worsens government openness as a result of the measures taken by the commitment.
- Did not change: Did not change status quo of government practice.
- Marginal: Some change, but minor in terms of its impact over level of openness.
- Major: A step forward for government openness in the relevant policy area, but remains limited in scope or scale.
- Outstanding: A reform that has transformed "business as usual" in the relevant policy area by opening government.

To assess this variable, researchers establish the status quo at the outset of the action plan. They then assess outcomes *as implemented* for changes in government openness.

Readers should keep in mind limitations. IRM end-of-term reports are prepared only a few months after the implementation cycle is completed. The variable focuses on outcomes that can be observed on government openness practices at the end of the two-year implementation period. The report and the variable do not intend to assess impact because of the complex methodological implications and the time frame of the report.

Table 4. Overview: Assessment of progress by commitment

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)					Potential Impact				Completion (Midterm / End of Term)				Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	None	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsens	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
1.2. Electronic registry of energy and industry permits (Midterm)		✔				✔			✔			✔			✔				✔			
1.2. (End of Term)															✔							
1.4. Promoting OGP values with local authorities (Midterm)	✔				✔					✔				✔						✔		
1.4. (End of Term)															✔							
2.1. Database on economic assistance beneficiaries (Midterm)			✔		✔							✔				✔			✔			
2.1. (End of Term)																✔						
3.2. National geoportal (Midterm)				✔		✔			✔			✔			✔					✔		
3.2. (End of Term)																✔						
4.2. Police service offices (Midterm)				✔		✔		✔	✔			✔				✔				✔		
4.2. (End of Term)																	✔					

Cluster 1: Denouncing corruption

Commitment Overview	None	Low	Medium	High	None	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsens	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
1.1. Standardization of corruption complaints (Midterm)		✔						✔				✔			✔					✔		
1.1. (End of Term)																	✔					
4.1. Whistleblower Protection Law (Midterm)			✔					✔					✔		✔					✔		
4.1. (End of Term)																✔						

Cluster 2: Open data & e-services

Commitment Overview	None	Low	Medium	High	None	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsens	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
1.3. Public expenses in open data (Midterm)			✔			✔			✔			✔				✔			✔			
1.3. (End of Term)															✔							
3.3. E-Albania (Midterm)			✔			✔			✔			✔				✔				✔		
3.3. (End of Term)																✔						

Cluster 3: Open access on natural resources data

Commitment Overview	None	Low	Medium	High	None	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsens	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
			✔			✔						✔			✔					✔		

2.2. Electronic portal on water resources management												✔						
3.1. Electronic access to protected areas		✔			✔	✔		✔			✔	✔				✔		
												✔						
Cluster 4: Simplified customs services																		
2.3. Single window			✔		✔					✔			✔				✔		
												✔						
3.4. E-document			✔		✔				✔				✔				✔		
												✔						

General overview of commitments

As part of OGP, countries are required to make commitments in a two-year action plan. End-of-term reports assess an additional metric, "did it open government?" The tables above and below summarize the completion level at the end of term and progress on this metric. For additional information on previously completed commitments, please see Albania IRM midterm progress report.[1]

The structure of this report is slightly different from that of the action plan; it evaluates five commitments individually and groups another eight commitments into four clusters. Originally, Albania's plan contained 13 commitments, but for a better understanding of the process, the IRM report has reorganized the action plan's commitments. The clustering was done for commitments targeting one specific priority (e.g., fight against corruption) or those falling within one sector (e.g., customs). The clusters are as follows:

⇒ Denouncing corruption

⇒ Open data & e-services

⇒ Open access on natural resources data

⇒ Simplified customs services

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[1] Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) Progress Report 2014–15: Albania, http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Albania_Second%20IRM%20Report_for%20public%20comment.pdf.

1.2 Electronic Registry of Energy and Industry Permits

Commitment Text: *Electronic Registry of authorizations, permits and agreements issued by the Ministry of Energy and Industry. The Ministry of Energy and Industry, in the framework of increasing transparency and accountability, has undertaken the Electronic Registry initiative, aiming to establish and publish in its web page an Electronic Registry of authorizations, permits and agreements given in the relevant fields and their updated status. Currently there is a lack of information not only on the procedures for obtaining an authorization or permit, but also citizens, interested groups, civil society have no information on the number of permits and authorization given in the energy and industry sector. In order to address this problem and acquire full transparency on the status of the actors operating in these field, the Ministry has initiated a process of identifying the current status, which will also allow an easier monitoring process. This registry system will help improving MEI transparency and accountability, but will also allow citizens to access information through the Electronic Registry.*

Responsible institution: Ministry of Energy and Industry

Supporting institution(s): N/A

Start date: 2014   End date: 2016

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion				Midterm	Did It Open Government?				
																	End of Term					
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed		Worsens	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
		✔			✔			✔			✔			✔					✔			
														✔								

Commitment Aim:

The commitment aims to establish an electronic registry for issuing authorizations, permits, and agreements in the energy and industry sector, enabling public access to information. The creation of the electronic registry follows up on Albania's e-concession commitment under the first OGP action plan 2012–13.

While the commitment in the first action plan was about the establishment of an electronic concession procedure, the second action plan commitment focuses on transparency and public access to authorizations, permits, and agreements issued by the Ministry of Energy and Industry (MEI).

The commitment is partly in line with a civil society recommendation proposed during the action plan consultations (March 2014), which dealt with transparency for companies operating in the Albanian extractive industry.

Status
Midterm: Limited

The MEI completed the inception phase of the electronic registry project, and the ministry was working on establishing a monitoring and information system for concessions. The amendments to the Law on Concessions and Public-Private Partnerships (July 2015) required additional bylaws regulating the electronic registry.[1]

End of term: Limited

According to the government self-assessment report (September 2016), there has been no further progress. In February 2016, the MEI updated the database of active permits in the mining industry.[2] On 3 March 2016, the Council of Ministers adopted the decision "on the establishment and administration of the Electronic Registry of Concessions and Public-Private Partnership." However, the website of the Agency of Concessions does not contain any information on the Concessions Register.[3] The government's self-assessment report stated that as of September 2016 the MEI had not completed the monitoring and information system for concessions.

Did it open government?
Access to information: Did not change

The electronic registry of concessions could contribute to enhancing transparency in the energy and industry sectors. Energy, especially hydropower generation, and the exploration of mineral resources like copper constitute a significant and growing sector of the Albanian economy. The potential impact of the registry largely depends on the types of information and datasets it provides for public access. Since the registry was not established and put online during the action plan period, this commitment did not improve access to information.

Carried forward?

This commitment is included in the new action plan 2016–2018. Specifically,, commitment 1.8 on open standards for contracting refers to the electronic registry. To implement this commitment successfully, the action plan relies on cooperation with civil society and other relevant agencies. The new commitment partially reflects the 2015 IRM midterm report's recommendations, especially those related to cooperation with experienced CSOs and the need for coordination with other state institutions. However, the commitment's language remains vague, particularly in terms of specific activities and a specific timeline.

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[1] IRM progress report,
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Albania_Second%20IRM%20Report_for%20public%20comment.pdf.
[2] Ministry of Energy and Industry, database on archive permits,
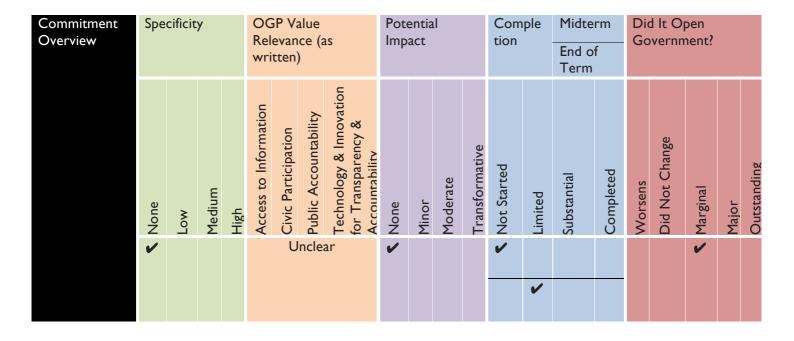http://www.energjia.gov.al/files/userfiles/minierat2/2016/RREGJ._LEJEVE_SHKURT_2016_Aktive.pdf.
[3] Agency of Concessions, http://www.atrako.gov.al/?page_id=112.

1.4. Promoting OGP Values among Local Authorities

Commitment Text: *The Minister of State for Innovation and Public Administration in cooperation with the Minister for Local Affairs and the open government partnership coalition of civil society organization will undertake together the commitment to promote and engage local authorities in the OGP values. This commitment was proposed by civil society organizations with the aim to introduce and promote the core value of OGP also in the governance of local authorities. The aim is to reinforce the participatory mechanism and built open governance also in the local level. Some of the actions that will be undertaken are promoting activities, legal modifications to promote transparency and other OGP values.*

Responsible institution(s): Minister of State for Innovation and Public Administration and the Minister of State for Local Affairs

Supporting institution(s): CSO Coalition for OGP Albania

Start date: 2014   End date: 2016

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm / End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsens	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
	✔						Unclear		✔				✔						✔		
														✔							

Commitment Aim:

This commitment aims to promote OGP values among local governments. As written, the commitment only describes activity "to promote and engage local authorities in the OGP values," and it does not include specific activities or intended results.

Status
Midterm: Not started

At the one-year mark, no progress was made. The minister of innovation and public administration, the minister of local affairs, and CSOs have not taken any steps. The government's self-assessment report noted that the implementation of this commitment has not started despite attempts by the CSO coalition to raise funds.[1]

End of term: Limited

The government's end-of-term self-assessment states that this commitment was partly implemented.[2] Members of the CSO Coalition for OGP Albania, Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM), Mjaft! Movement, and Infocip have implemented specific projects with local government authorities

to promote the OGP process and values.[3] Some members of the CSO coalition conducted awareness-raising activities with local government authorities in some municipalities (Shkodra, Fier, etc.). A more systematic and coordinated effort between the central government and the CSO coalition did not take place over the past year (2015–2016).

Did it open government?
Access to information: Marginal
The efforts to promote OGP values among local governments have led to increased awareness among some local governments. Although the efforts of the CSO coalition did not have a direct impact on opening government, they encouraged local government units to initiate the OGP agenda with concrete commitments. The Municipality of Tirana, which became engaged in various OGP events because of increased awareness nationally, offers a positive example of OGP influence through the launch of its Tirana Ime (My Tirana) app: http://www.tirana.al/aplikacioni-tirana-ime/. The app includes six different categories (traffic, transportation, pollution, information, reports, and tourism), and the mayor of Tirana showcased it nationally and globally (including at the OGP Summit in Mexico in October 2015). The "Report" section of the app allows citizens to submit online complaints or other reports on various municipal services.

Carried forward?
This commitment was carried forward in the new action plan. The Ministry of Local Issues and InfoCip, which is a member of the CSO Coalition for OGP Albania, publish central and local government legislation in open systems and for free. InfoCip runs a national portal (www.vendime.al) which publishes legal acts adopted by local government units.

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[1] IRM progress report,
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Albania_Second%20IRM%20Report_for%20public%20comment.pdf.
[2] Government of Albania, End-of-term self-assessment (September 2016).
[3] Interviews with IDM, Mjaft!, and InfoCip representatives.

2.1. Database on Economic Assistance Beneficiaries

Commitment Text: *The Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, in close collaboration with the State Social Service, in the framework of the reform for poverty alleviation, increase of transparency, service quality and effective use of budgetary funds and exclusion of abusive cases in the economic assistance scheme, has undertaken the initiative to establish the National Electronic Registry of beneficiaries of Economic Assistance.*
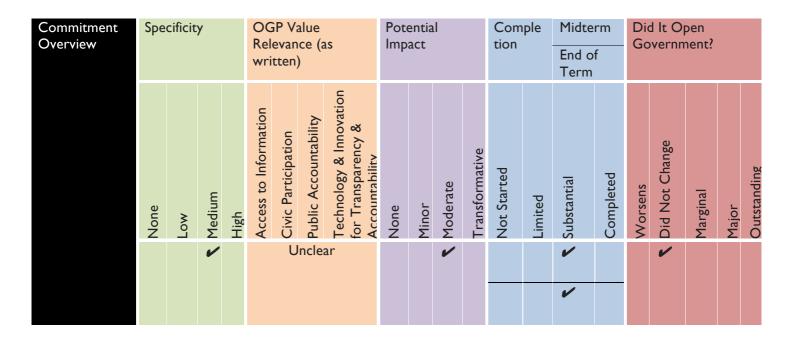
The administration of benefits is hindered by inadequate capacity, lack of information system, supervision and controls. Albania currently has no national electronic registry of economic assistance seekers and the administration of receiving welfare benefits takes place locally with paper documentation. This consequently leads to (a) inefficiency in the application and granting of benefits (higher transaction costs), (b) weaknesses in supervision and control of fraud and error, and (c) monitoring and evaluation of ineffective social policy.

The implementation of the new system will help improving the effectiveness of State Social Service by identifying families in need, will improve the evaluation of beneficiaries from applicant families and will exclude abusive cases in the Economic Assistance Scheme.

Responsible institution: Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth

Supporting institution(s): State Social Service

Start date: 2014 End date: 2016

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion				Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsens	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
Midterm			✔				Unclear				✔				✔			✔			
End of Term															✔						

Commitment Aim:

The commitment aims to improve the effectiveness of Albania's social assistance scheme by establishing the National Electronic Registry of Beneficiaries of Economic Assistance. The registry is part of the Social Assistance Modernization Project for Albania, a joint initiative of the World Bank Albania and the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth (MSWY). In 2013, the registry was piloted in Tirana, Durres, and Elbasan.

This important initiative can ensure more efficiency in financial aid, reduce administrative burdens, and shorten the application process for beneficiaries. However, the system is only for internal government use.

Status
Midterm: Substantial

The government's midterm self-assessment report states that this commitment is completed. However, at the one-year mark, the registry was not fully operational. As of July 2015, the MSWY and the State Social Services were monitoring implementation of the system in the pilot regions. Measures were undertaken to expand the links with other governmental databases and include additional modules, such as the electronic registry for people with disabilities. The registry was expected to be fully operational at the national level after 2016.[1]

End of term: Substantial

The implementation of the registry has progressed during 2016 as per the Social Assistance Modernization Project. The World Bank's latest midterm review of the project rates its implementation as moderately satisfactory due to "delayed implementation of a few key activities."[2]

In April 2015, the Parliament approved amendments to the Law on Social Assistance and Services (2005) which affect the criteria and procedures for economic assistance. According to the government's end-of-term self-assessment (September 2016) report, the system has five modules, is fully implemented in the three pilot regions, and is interconnected with eight state institutions, including tax authorities and the employment service. By the end of 2016, the registry is expected to cover the remaining nine regions of Albania. The World Bank project, which finances the registry, is set to end in June 2017.

Did it open government?
The National Electronic Registry of Beneficiaries of Economic Assistance started operating in three regions of Albania in June 2014. The system helps assess applications and plays a role in control and verification processes. Additionally, the system assists in electronic payments. The registry is interlinked with other governmental databases—such as the civil registration database, social security, the state employment service, the immovable property register, and the national center of registration of businesses—in order to evaluate applications. The digitalization of the economic assistance system has served to mitigate abuses. However, the media has reported several cases of unfair exclusion from economic assistance. The ombudsman's annual report (2014) presented a total of 184 individual or group complaints about economic assistance, and it has issued a recommendation for the MSWY.[3]

The registry is an important tool that promotes effective and evidence-based social policies. However, as noted in the IRM midterm report (September 2015), the registry does not include elements that accentuate transparency, participation, access to information, or public accountability. There is no evidence that, as implemented, this commitment has advanced key OGP values.

Carried forward?
This commitment is not carried forward in the next action plan.

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[1] IRM progress report,
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Albania_Second%20IRM%20Report_for%20public%20comment.pdf.
[2] World Bank, Albania Social Assistance Modernization Project,
http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/137141468008128435/Albania-Social-Assistance-Modernization-Project-P122233-Implementation-Status-Results-Report-Sequence-07).
[3] Ombudsman, Annual Report 2014, http://www.avokatipopullit.gov.al/sites/default/files/ctools/RAPORTI%202014.pdf.

3.2. National Geoportal

Commitment Text:

The Ministry for Innovation and Public Administration, in collaboration of the Albanian Authority for geospatial information will undertake the creation of a National Electronic Geoportal, which, for the first time, will provide citizens and institutions, transparent and accurate geospatial information. Through the National Geoportal mapping citizens and interested parties can access to topographic maps, orthophotos, boundary maps, indicative maps of immobile property, and maps of the property value. Some of the steps that will measure the implementation of this commitment are, the interagency coordination in order to enable existing data collection, preparation of the terms of reference for software and hardware infrastructure needed for the realization of this commitment, preparation of the data model for the existing geospatial information, preliminary geo-portal website will make available the existing information, preparation of new geospatial information. Information on land property and value, positioning and boundary maps and data are information that currently is very difficult for citizens to collect. Also the level of corruption in this field has been very high for long time. Through the implementation of this commitment will contribute in facilitating the access to geospatial maps and data in a unique portal.

Editorial Note: The commitment describes "some steps" for its implementation:

- Interagency coordination in order to enable existing data collection;
- Preparation of the terms of reference for software and hardware infrastructure needed for the realization of this commitment;
- Preparation of the data model for the existing geospatial information;
- Preliminary geoportal website will make available the existing information;
- Preparation of new geospatial information.

Responsible institution(s): Ministry for Innovation and Public Administration; State Authority for Geospatial Information (SAGI)
Supporting institution(s): N/A
Start date: 2014   End date: 2016

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion				Midterm / End of Term	Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed		Worsens	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
Overall				✔	✔			✔			✔			✔						✔		
															✔							

Commitment Aim:

The commitment aims to provide transparent and accurate geospatial information and related services. The State Authority for Geospatial Information (SAGI), established in 2013, developed and manages the portal.

A law passed in June 2012 created the national geoportal. The government began developing the portal in 2013 through a grant from the Norwegian government for EUR 1.2 million and with the technical support of the Norwegian Mapping Authority. At the time of action plan adoption (June 2014), the geoportal was already in the beta stage and was being populated with data.

Status
Midterm: Limited

In 2015 SAGI's activities on the national geoportal consisted of adding new data, including 2015 census information on educational institutions, roads, geology, protected areas, property values, territorial division, cadastres, topographical maps, and orthophotos. By September 2015, the geoportal offered nearly 40 services free of charge for institutions and the public at large.[1]

While progress was made in publishing information, further work was needed to comply with standards of INSPIRE (Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community) Directive. This directive aims to create a European Union spatial data infrastructure that will enable the sharing of environmental spatial information among public-sector organizations and better facilitate public access to spatial information across Europe.

End of term: Substantial

The tendering procedures for the software of the geoportal were opened in December 2015, after preparation of ToRs for software and hardware.[2] During 2016 the government contracted with a software company to develop the national geoportal in full conformity with Law No. 72/2012 and the INSPIRE Directive. Other technical milestones necessary for the functioning of the portal have been largely on track and remain ongoing as per the objectives of the geoportal.

As of October 2016, the geoportal offered 54 services, including administrative divisions, topographical maps, land suitability descriptions, an inventory of zoning and protected areas, and road infrastructure maps.[3]

Did it open government?
Access to information: Marginal
This commitment is highly relevant to OGP values and in its advanced stages of implementation may deliver major if not transformative impact. The information and services offered through the geoportal would reinforce open data, transparent governance reforms, and an evidence-based approach to decision making. This will, however, require adequate coordination with relevant state institutions in addition to the necessary strategic planning and monitoring framework.

At the end of the commitment implementation period, the geoportal has had a positive effect on increasing access to geospatial information. In the period from June 2014 to June 2016, the government has populated the portal with new data, and according to the figures provided by the SAGI representatives, the number of visitors between August 2015 and August 2016 reached 141,129 (nearly 11,700 visitors per month). The main users are state institutions, but users also include private companies and citizens.[4]

Carried forward?
This commitment has not been carried forward in the new 2016–2018 action plan. In addition to updating the geoportal with datasets and new services, the government could promote its public use broadly. This could include reaching out to the media, civil society, and academia—important users who may further analyze public information and hold institutions accountable.

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[1] IRM progress report,
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Albania_Second%20IRM%20Report_for%20public%20comment.pdf.
[2] Tender notice available at https://doffin.no/en/Notice/Details/2016-044438.
[3] Geoportal available at http://geoportal.asig.gov.al/(X(1)S(fd04sigwdzqk0ns0p4cfdttv))/Map.aspx?lang=AL.
[4] Information submitted via email, 18 October 2016.

4.2. Police Service Offices

Commitment Text: *The Albanian Government in the aim to ensure and facilitate the access to Police Service, will establish "one stop shop" point in each police district with the purpose to: create a unified reception desk for all services delivered, simplify the procedures and limit the number of documents to be submitted. The one stop shop will also improve and make more efficient the cooperation Police-Community thus helping in the creation of a safer community and raise public participation. Currently the police district stations are closed areas where the citizens have very little access or not access at all. This commitment aims to open up police services to citizens by offering them not only access but also a transparent service, on time, avoiding bureaucracy and corruption. Service delivery to citizens through these offices will increase the citizen's trust to the police, and will affect in the prevention of the corruption phenomena among the police organization. Restoring the communication with the public, through the provision of the administrative and procedural services, aims to be achieved through the electronic registration of their needs and their requests, and forwarding them, together with relevant documentation to the office of reviewing and resolving the problem within the time, as scheduled. The Police Service Offices will be set up and operate in all of police structures, from the General Directorate of Police to the police directorates and commissariats in the districts, which will have open premises for the public and will operate non-stop 24 hours, reception-shaped, for Administrative and Procedural Service. The number of police service offices that will be open, the number of services that will be available for citizens, the number of citizens served will used as indicators to verify the implementation of this commitment.*

Editorial Note: The commitment's description elaborates on a number of specific actions that may be categorized into two core milestones:

1. Establishing the "one stop shop" point (24/7 reception) in each police district
   a. A unique reception desk for all services delivered operating with simplified procedures
2. Electronically registering citizens' needs and requests and forwarding them to the respective offices

Responsible institution: General Directorate of State Police
Supporting institution(s): N/A
Start date: 2014   End date: 2016

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion				Midterm / End of Term	Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed		Worsens	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
Overall				✔	✔		✔	✔			✔				✔		Midterm			✔		
															✔		End of Term					

Commitment Aim:

This commitment aims to improve the quality of police services to citizens. The police service offices should serve as one-stop shops for citizens. They are meant to simplify the procedures and limit the number of documents citizens need to submit. Sophisticated information and communication

technology (ICT) infrastructure, including a software application that facilitates monitoring the entire service-delivery process, assists the offices and promotes transparency.

This commitment represents an important step toward enhancing public trust by making police services more open and efficient.

Status
Midterm: Substantial

By September 2015, the police service offices had been established in nine out of twelve of the police regional directorates in the country. During 2015, the application for electronic registration of citizens' requests was developed and tested for some services, such as lost document statements and authorizations for hunting weapons. Based on this testing, there were further upgrades to the application. The IRM midterm report found that this commitment produced additional initiatives beyond its scope. For instance, the police took innovative steps, such as introducing the digital commissariat application, to encourage proactive citizens. The digital commissariat application ("Komisariati dixhital") enables citizens to report corruption and other illegal activities in real time to the State Police.[1]

End of term: Substantial

According to the Government's end-of-term self-assessment (September 2016) report, 20 Citizen Service Offices (CSO) were established in the local police departments of Tirana, Lezha, Berat, Vlora, Korça, Fier, Kukës, Durrës, Elbasan, Shkodra, Dibra, Gjirokastra, Pogradec, Lushnjë, and Kavaja. The IRM researcher traced and confirmed the opening of these service offices.[2] Additionally, significant progress was made on electronically registering citizens' needs and requests. The application for the electronic registry has been fully developed and implemented in all regional directorates.[3] However, not all application functions work properly, and the ICT infrastructure needs further investment.

Did it open government?
Access to information: Marginal
Public accountability: Did not change

The one-stop shops offer better citizen access to police services and are intended to simplify procedures, such as obtaining permits and passports. The offices have helped citizens access information about official documents and permits, information that was publicly available but in less accessible language. in the official gazette (published laws) or on the website of the State Police. On the other hand, the software used in the police offices is designed only for internal operations, and as of September 2016 there were no mechanisms for citizens to evaluate police office services. Therefore, this commitment has not led to any changes in improving public accountability.

Despite the improvements and reforms over the past years, police corruption is still a serious concern.[4] Preliminary findings from the 2016 Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM) study on police integrity and corruption in Albania highlight that corruption remains serious and widespread in the State Police.[5] Independent experts argue that the commitment should be accompanied with more comprehensive monitoring and accountability measures.[6] Some concrete measures include immediate citizen evaluation of services at police service offices and publicly available analysis including datasets of performance indicators (i.e., number of complaints/requests received and processed at police service offices, average time of processing, and a list of the most applied for services).

Carried forward?

This commitment has not been carried forward in the new 2016–2018 action plan. The IRM midterm report 2014–2015 recommended a number of actions which if implemented would have a significant impact on opening government. These measures include partnering with civil society or community

organizations to monitor performance of police service offices and introducing anonymous evaluation tools for citizens accessing the offices.

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[1] IRM progress report, http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Albania_Second%20IRM%20Report_for%20public%20comment.pdf.

[2] Inauguration of one-stop-shop offices (2015–2016), http://www.punetebrendshme.gov.al/al/te-rejat/lajme/celen-zyrat-e-sherbimit-unik-per-qytetaret-ne-korce-e-pogradec-video, https://www.asp.gov.al/index.php/component/content/article/17-shqip/lajmet-e-fundit/9078-inaugurimi-i-zyrave-te-sherbimit-per-qytetaret-ne-komisariatin-e-policise-nr-5-ne-kamez, https://www.asp.gov.al/index.php/component/content/article/275-slideshow-home/8159-inagurohet-zyra-e-sherbimit-unik-per-qytetaret-ne-kom-3-ne-tirane, https://www.asp.gov.al/index.php/component/content/article/275-slideshow-home/7486-celet-zyra-e-sherbimit-per-qytetaret-ne-durres, https://www.asp.gov.al/index.php/component/content/article/275-slideshow-home/7347-elbasan-hapen-zyrat-e-sherbimit-per-qytetaret, http://www.punetebrendshme.gov.al/al/te-rejat/lajme/ministri-tahiri-inauguron-komisariatin-dhe-zyren-e-sherbimeve-ne-lushnje, http://www.punetebrendshme.gov.al/al/te-rejat/lajme/lezhe-inaugurohet-zyra-e-sherbimit-unik-ne-drejtorine-vendore-te-policise.

[3] Interview with Ministry of Interior official, September 2016.

[4] European Commission, Albania Progress Report, October 2014, p. 2. bit.ly/1BQGIgC.

[5] Interview with IDM research team on the "Police integrity index," October 2016.

[6] Interviews with civil society experts and a focus group discussion, September 2015.

Cluster 1: Denouncing Corruption

Editorial Note: This cluster (C.1) combines two individual commitments pertaining to legislation and bylaws in the fight against corruption.

Commitment 1.1. Standardization of Corruption Complaints

Commitment 1.1. Text: *The Minister of State for Local Issues, in the role of the National Coordinator for Anti-Corruption, will undertake the standardization of the process related to complaints addressing corruption. Currently, although many ministries have been given green lines or forms to denounce corruption, there is no standardized procedure, which ensures transparency in the review of the complaint and concrete deadlines to ensure a good service. Some of the indicators and milestones set for this commitment are the drafting of relevant guidelines for addressing corruption complaints, Integrating them in each ministry transparency plan rules, publish them online. Given the specifics and difficulty of the fight and investigation of corruption, this system, through the standardization of processes, can increase confidence in the administration and increase the number of informants. Ministries will have to officially publish relevant standards and inform the public on the progress of specific issues, thus raising the level of accountability of the public administration. This commitment will help improve the transparency regarding the complaint procedures in fact until now there is no clear information on how a citizen can actually address a complaint in corruption cases. The publication of this "standards" will not only create uniformity in the way the complaint will be address but will also serve in raising the efficiency of the public administration while handling corruption complaints.*

Responsible institution: Minister of State for Local Issues (MSLI)

Supporting institution(s): Ministries, Parliament

Start date: 2014   End date: 2016

Commitment 4.1. Law on Whistleblower Protection

Commitment 4.1. Text: *Currently, the trust of the public towards the public administration is low, while the risk that an informant will have when denouncing cases of corruption is very high. In Albania, there is no clear framework which ensures cooperation with informants and protects whistleblowers. This law, together with the awareness campaign that will follow, will ensure that informants that will entrust the enforcement agencies with information regarding corruption in sectors where they work or are involved, will be protected. This law will not only enhance transparency and reporting of cases of corruption, but also the credibility of the administration. A draft law currently exists and is under consultation. The law is in line with the National Strategy on the Fight Against Corruption 2014-2017 which provides for both preventative and awareness-raising objectives. Furthermore, the adoption of the law is also part of the Roadmap Priority Nr. 3 commitment for the fight against corruption in the context of Albania,Äôs integration in the EU. There will be a broad consultation with government agencies and donors, while there are also planned consultation meetings for the civil society and business sector. Following these consultations, the draft will be edited to reflect comments, and after further internal and external consultations, the law is expected to be finalized in fall and adopted before the end of the year.*

Responsible institution: Minister of State for Local Issues (MSLI)

Supporting institution(s): Ministries, Parliament

Start date: 2014   End date: 2016

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm		Did It Open Government?				
															End of Term						
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsens	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
1.1. Standardization of corruption complaints			✔				✔				✔				✔				✔		
																✔					
4.1. Whistleblower Protection Law				✔			✔					✔		✔					✔		
																✔					

Commitments Aim:

Various civil society organizations have concerns about the standardization of the corruption complaints procedure and the Whistleblower Protection Law. Both commitments are currently part of Albania's Anti-Corruption Strategy 2015–2020 and its 2015–2017 action plan.

Commitment 1.1 aims to standardize the corruption complaints procedure through the creation and operation of an online portal for reporting corruption cases. The commitment also includes the disclosure of transparency rules within each ministry.

Commitment 4.1 aims to finalize and adopt the draft law on whistleblower protection, which will help combat corruption in the public sector.

Status

Commitment 1.1
Midterm: Substantial

On 5 March 2015, the prime minister issued an order adopting the regulation on the procedures for registering, handling, and storing corruption complaints. These regulations and procedures have been integrated into the anti-corruption portal, www.stopkorrupsionit.al. The portal was launched in February 2015 and allows citizens to submit corruption complaints online and to upload evidence, such as photos, videos, or documents. Citizens may choose to disclose their identities or submit claims anonymously.

By the midterm assessment, many ministries had not published their transparency programs, registers of requests, and responses. The government's self-assessment says this commitment is implemented. However, it does not disclose the number of central institutions that have integrated transparency rules and standards by the end of the reporting period.[1]

End of term: Complete

As of 30 June 2016, the anti-corruption portal has had approximately 9,900 visits during 2016, with 14,410 reports submitted since its launch. Out of 14,410 cases, 6,330 were solved, 6,260 were rejected, and 1,037 were under review. The average review process per complaint takes 16 days.[2] At the end of the implementation period, all governmental ministries have published transparency programs[3] containing all categories of publicly available information. In addition to this program, all ministries have published information on the coordinators for the right to information and the register of requests for information.

Commitment 4.1
Midterm: Limited
The deadline for the adoption of the law on whistleblow protection was postponed from the end of 2014 to mid-2015. According to the 2015–17 action plan of the Inter-sectoral Strategy against Corruption 2015–20, the implementation of other measures related to this law (i.e., adoption of bylaws and establishing and strengthening state structures for implementation) was expected to conclude by the end of 2016.[4]

End of term: Complete
In June 2016, the Parliament adopted the Whistleblower Protection Law (Official Gazette No.115, 23 June 2016). The law entered into force on 8 July 2016. At the time of writing the end-of-term report, the Government was drafting the bylaws and other acts. With the support of the Netherlands Embassy, Partners Albania, a civil society organization based in Tirana, is carrying out a national awareness campaign and a series of roundtables on the implementation of the law.

Did it open government?

Commitment 1.1
Public accountability: Marginal
Civil society representatives have raised concerns about the government's response to citizens' complaints made via the portal. In 2015 CSOs suggested that there was an absence of information related to "what happened after the report was made and what concrete measures followed." The lack of follow-up information could cause the public to lose interest and even become skeptical of these tools.[5] In order to improve transparency and access to information, the portal has added a "statistics section" (http://stat.stopkorrupsionit.al/). The number of submitted reports sharply decreased in 2016. The numbers dropped from 7,000 in the first half of 2015 (six months) to fewer than 3,000 between July 2015 and September 2016 (almost 15 months). As of September 2016, the portal did not provide any information on the outcome of solved reports.

Commitment 4.1
Public accountability: Marginal
This commitment has a significant potential impact for enabling public-sector employees to report corruption.[6] However, because the law is new, it is too soon to see any tangible results affecting public accountability. Nevertheless, the government has shown signs of ensuring the law's implementation. For instance, in July 2016 the MSLI, the High Inspectorate of Declaration and Audit of Assets and Conflict of Interests (HIDAACI), and Partners Albania signed a memorandum of understanding, which is the first step in an intensive awareness-raising campaign for public officials.

CSOs interviewed for this report view the adoption of the law positively but note that its success and tangible impact will largely depend on the judicial reform which Albania is currently implementing.

Carried forward?

The commitment on the anti-corruption portal has not been carried forward in the new 2016–2018 action plan. The new action plan does include the commitment on the Whistleblower Protection Law, focusing on reinforcing the law's implementation, regarding capacity building and subsequent amendments and bylaws.

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[1] IRM progress report, http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Albania_Second%20IRM%20Report_for%20public%20comment.pdf.

[2] Anti-corruption portal, www.stopkorrupsionit.al.

[3] IRM monitoring of government ministries' websites.

[4] IRM progress report, http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Albania_Second%20IRM%20Report_for%20public%20comment.pdf.

[5] IRM progress report, http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Albania_Second%20IRM%20Report_for%20public%20comment.pdf.

[6] Civil society stakeholders have confirmed this expectation during the consultations on the draft law (2015) and, currently, during various awareness-raising activities on the implementation of the Whistleblower Protection Law.

Cluster 2: Open Data & e-Services

This cluster is composed of two commitments, as follows:

Commitment 1.3. Implementation of Public Expenses Module in "Open Data" Format

Commitment 1.3. Text: *The National Agency for Information Society in the context of the global initiative "Partnership for Open Governance", will undertake as commitment the implementation of a module that will allow in an open data format, online access to information on budgetary data of the Ministries. This module will be accessed from the government portal e-Albania and the official websites of the respective institutions. This module will provide information in real time of budgetary expenses of the Council of Ministers and Line Ministries in order to guarantee complete and transparent information of the expenses. The indicators such as the functionality of the module, the number of visitors of the web pages or downloaded information will be used to verify the implementation of this commitment.*

Responsible institution(s): Ministry of State for Innovation and Public Administration (MSIPA) and the National Agency for Information Society (NAIS)

Supporting institution(s): Ministries

Start date: 2014   End date: 2016

Commitment 3.3. E-Albania

Commitment 3.3. Text: *E-Albania portal serves as a single contact point for government services, helping to improve the overall accessibility of information to the public. Interoperability Platform on which this portal is based can be extended for other essential governmental services. Until now, information for 170 services offered by the public administration has been published. Services as access to personal data, business data, and online declaration of personal income will soon be added as e-services offered by the portal. E-Albania will be in enriched with various other public e-services. The aim of this commitment is to pass from first level services (informative services) to level 3 and 4, which means public services that are offered entirely online. It is expected that during 2015, 10 new services with be offered entirely online and other 10 will be added in 2016. Editorial Note: Both commitments will be implemented by MSIPA and the National Agency for Information Society (NAIS). In addition, the public will have access to their deliverables through the e-Albania portal – first commitment delivering a "public expenses module" with open data and the second commitment, expanding the number of e-services accessed through e-Albania.*

Responsible institution(s): MSIPA and NAIS

Supporting institution(s): Ministries

Start date: 2014   End date: 2016

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm / End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsens	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
1.3. Public expenses in open data			✔		✔			✔			✔				✔			✔			
														✔							
3.3. E-Albania			✔		✔			✔			✔				✔				✔		
															✔						

Commitments Aim:

Through the use of information technology, these commitments aim to improve access to information about government services. Specifically, the public expenses module enables transparency in governmental spending. And the e-Albania initiative is designed as a portal through which citizens both can access information and can receive e-services from state institutions.

Status
Commitment 1.3
Midterm: Substantial

In 2014 the Council of Ministers began displaying budget information through a module on its website. The module has an open data format and publishes budget information from the council and the ministries. The websites of some line ministries also have a link to the module. At the one-year mark of the action plan, the module offered government spending data from 1 January 2015. However, the government and ministry spending information was displayed as a percentage of the respective budgets and did not provide actual budget figures. Visitors could access the visualized information, not open data, for the government or a specific ministry, with a total of 11 expenditure categories. Therefore, the module did not meet the criteria for a five-star open data standard as envisaged in the action plan.

As implemented, this tool met the two-star standard of open data. It provided access to downloadable data in Excel format on the Treasury General Directorate's daily payments for 2014 and 2015. The same data was available in a more open format on the e-Albania portal.[1]

End of term: Limited

No further progress was made in the implementation of this commitment between September 2015 and September 2016. The government did not update the module with 2016 public expenses data, and the module has since been removed from the Council of Ministers' website. On the other hand, the Ministry of Finance regularly updates the module on its website with daily payments from the Treasury.[2]

The government's end-of-term self-assessment refers to this commitment as implemented, using the Ministry of Finance's module as evidence. However, this module was not part of commitment 1.3 in the 2014–2016 action plan, but rather a delivered result of the 2012–2013 action plan.

Commitment 3.3
Midterm: Substantial

The e-Albania portal has increased the number of offered services from 177 in 2013 to a total of 700 in September 2015. However, the majority of these services were "information and guidance" (first-level services) on other state services that citizens or businesses may use. Services with interoperability functions, which would allow the exchange and use of information, were limited.[3]

End of term: Substantial

The e-Albania portal has noted significant improvements between September 2015 and September 2016. Another 148 new services have been added to the portal since the IRM midterm report, increasing the total number of services from 700 in September 2015 to 848 in September 2016. Although the majority of information is mostly guidance on state services, the number of e-services with transaction (level 3) and interoperability functions (level 5) has reached a total of 278. The government plans for the portal to be the main gateway for citizens to access a range of services electronically. In order to realize that goal, government institutions continue to digitize more services.

Did it open government?

Commitment 1.3
Access to information: Did not change
The module on the government's and ministries' websites does not provide information in an open data format and has not been used by civil society or media representatives. The e-Albania portal includes the Ministry of Finance's module as one of the e-services that can be accessed without registration in the portal.[4] The Ministry of Finance's disclosure of daily payments, despite meeting only a three-star open data standard, has been used more frequently by civil society and media stakeholders (e.g., Albanian Institute of Science (AIS) and the Albanian portal of the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network - Reporter.al).

Most interviewed civil society representatives and journalists reported either that they had no information on the Council of Ministers' module or that they did not find it helpful.[5] Moreover, the module was eventually removed. CSOs consider the data on payments made available by the Treasury General Directorate at the Ministry of Finance to be a more useful tool.

Commitment 3.3
Access to information: Marginal

E-Albania's number of unique users has increased significantly, from approximately 18,000 users per month in 2015 to 26,500 unique users per month as of October 2016.[6] E-Albania mostly offers information on how to obtain various services from state institutions.

Evidence on the most frequently used services suggests a great interest for second- and third-level services on the portal. According to MSIPA official data, the five most frequently used services are: the submission of annual financial accounts at the National Business Center, high school graduation exam registration[7], electricity bill payment, applications for health cards, and the generation of health cards. The range of users, from students to businesses, of these and other services[8] suggests that e-Albania's strength lies in its interoperability functions, which help individuals and companies obtain services online.

Carried forward?

Commitment 1.1 has not been carried over to the 2016–2018 action plan. The IRM midterm report suggested a redesign of the module to meet open data standards or, as an alternative, withdrawal from this commitment and focusing instead on the opendata.gov.al portal.

The commitment on e-Albania has been carried forward in the 2016–2018 action plan. The new commitments expand the e-Albania portal, providing new e-services with interoperability functions. This commitment aims at delivering e-services through an electronic forms management system (Eforms). Furthermore, a number of other commitments in the new action plan are directly connected to this platform, including the establishment of an electronic registry for public notification and consultation (commitment 1.4), establishment and distribution of digital counters (commitment 3.3), and an electronic system for professional licensing of individuals and legal entities operating in the construction sector (commitment 4.2).

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[1] IRM progress report, http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Albania_Second%20IRM%20Report_for%20public%20comment.pdf.

[2] Source: http://www.financa.gov.al/al/raportime/thesari/pagesa-te-kryera-nga-drejtoria-e-pergjithshme-e-thesarit.

[3] IRM progress report, http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Albania_Second%20IRM%20Report_for%20public%20comment.pdf.

[4] Source: https://e-albania.al/MFtreasure.aspx.

[5] Interviews with AIS Director Aranita Brahaj and with journalists form the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN).

[6] MSIPA submitted the official data upon IRM request (October 2016). According to this data, e-Albania in the period June–December 2015 had a total of 126,000 unique visitors who have completed at least one session within the portal. From 1 January to 20 October 2016, a total of 265,000 unique users completed at least one session within e-Albania.

[7] The ability to register for high school examinations online, known as "State Matura," began in early 2013. High school seniors could use the State Matura service offered through the e-Albania portal to register for their high school graduate exams (matura). This also allows for state institutions, such as the National Exams Agency and the Ministry of Education, to exchange information on the State Matura applications.

[8] Other frequently used e-services include accessing State Matura exam scores, declaring and paying contributions by employers, accessing family data, accessing "my vehicles," and dealing with traffic offenses. MSIPA submitted the official data upon IRM request (October 2016).

Cluster 3: Open Access on Natural Resources Data

This cluster is composed of two commitments, as follows:

Commitment 2.2. Electronic Portal on Water Resources Administration and Management

Commitment 2.2. Text: *The interested parties applying for a license or authorization for the use of water resources face a complicated and long procedure of application. The lack of a national inventory of permits for the use of water resources is also a disadvantage that causes conflicts between the institutional stakeholders and the interested parties. The Ministry of Environment, through the Directorate of Policies for Water Resources, will undertake the creation of an integrated water management system that will improve the cooperation of public and private actors through the use of new technologies for license applications and control. This system will help increase the transparency on the use of water resources in Albania. This commitment seeks to improve governance of natural resources for a better water management by reducing the cases of corruption, strengthening the public awareness on water management. The creation of an online register of water resources users will positively affect transparence and public access to information.*

Responsible institution: Ministry of Environment

Supporting institution(s): N/A

Start date: 2014   End date: 2016

Commitment 3.1. Electronic Access to Protected Areas

Commitment 3.1. Text: *Electronic access to a registry of protected areas increases the participation and the inclusiveness of the public opinion and interested stakeholders for activities related to protected areas, hunting areas and national legislative initiatives in the field of nature conservation and biodiversity. The access to the portal will allow consultation of legal documents related to environment protection, a database of new Protected Areas (PA) or extension of existing PA, information on Hunting Areas and associated GIS digital maps. The creation of this portal will strongly contribute in the increase of transparency and public participation; in fact the portal will allow interactive exchange of opinions on draft laws, regulations, and strategies in the field of protected areas.*

Responsible institution: Ministry of Environment

Supporting institution(s): N/A

Start date: 2014   End date: 2016

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion				Did It Open Government?				
														Midterm							
														End of Term							
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsens	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
2.2. Electronic portal on water resources			✔		✔						✔			✔				✔			
														✔							
3.1. Electronic access to protected areas		✔			✔	✔		✔			✔			✔				✔			
														✔							

Commitments Aim:
These commitments were proposed by Albanian civil society members, and they aim to improve transparency in the administration and management of natural resources, such as water and protected areas. The commitments entail the publication of concessions to private companies to use natural resources and the creation of a public database on polluted areas. Additionally, the commitments call for awareness-raising campaigns to inform citizens on the consequences of pollution in their communities.

Status
Commitment 2.2
Midterm: Limited

The Law on the Integrated Management of Water Resources (2012) mandates the creation of an electronic portal called the national register of permits, authorizations, and concessions. At the time of the action plan adoption, there was a water use database on the website of the Ministry of Environment.[1] The database showed authorizations on the use of water resources and was available in Excel format. The portal on water resources administration and management represents a much more comprehensive undertaking. It is part of a complex assistance project initiated by the World Bank in May 2013 in cooperation with respective ministries and the Technical Secretariat of the National Council of Water. The project provides assistance to the government in designing the national strategy of integrated water management, developing the water cadastre, and creating the electronic portal on water resources administration and management.

At the midterm, the electronic portal on water resources administration and management was in the early stages of development, and its progress depended on the development of water cadastres. The government's midterm self-assessment reported this commitment as not implemented.[2]

End of term: Limited

The government's end-of-term self-assessment states that this commitment was transferred from the Ministry of Environment to the Ministry of Agriculture, but no further action has taken place.

The design of the portal has not advanced since September 2015. The water cadastre remains at an early stage of development. In early 2016, the Ministry of Agriculture opened a tender for technical supervision, verification, and independent validation of a Geographical Information System (GIS) water cadastre.[3] According to the terms of reference, this service contract will be carried out through 34 working days over a 12-month period, thus extending into 2017.

Commitment 3.1
Midterm: Limited

At the time of the OGP action plan's publication (July 2014), a database of protected areas was online at the Ministry of Environment's website along with a map of protected areas. The development of this portal was entrusted to the National Agency of Protected Areas. At the midterm, the development of the portal was at an early stage. The portal was meant to provide more detailed information on every protected area, including plans, activity, flora, fauna, etc. The government's midterm self-assessment suggests this commitment was partially implemented. However, it does not report on specific implemented activities, with the exception of creating the template database for electronic access to protected areas. As the commitment's description suggests, the portal will serve also as a channel for public consultation of legal documents related to environmental protection.[4]

End of term: Limited

Although the National Agency of Protected Areas has carried out significant work to establish a database of protected areas, the commitment's implementation remains limited considering its intended scope. The agency has designed a complete database (HTML format) of protected areas as a subsection of its website, including basic descriptions and information about each of these areas.[5] However, it does not include digital maps, and it did not hold an interactive consultation forum on draft laws, regulations, and strategies on protected areas.

Did it open government?
Both commitments are highly relevant to OGP values and are in line with civil society recommendations to improve transparency and to open access to natural resources data.

Commitment 2.2
Access to information: Did not change

Commitment 2.2 had limited progress, which has resulted in limiting the actual results of this important initiative. CSO stakeholders stated that although the commitment had good intentions the timeline for implementation was unrealistic.

Commitment 3.1
Access to information: Marginal
Civic participation: Did not change

The complete implementation of the commitment would have improved access to information via the portal, as well as GIS links and civic participation through consultations. The national agency offers basic information on protected areas, which marginally improves access to information as these facts were not publicly available prior to this commitment.[6] Since the portal does not provide a way for the public to comment on legislation, this commitment has not created any opportunities for citizen participation.

Carried forward?
Commitments were not carried forward in the new action plan.

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[1] Available at bit.ly/1W7xVCN.

[2] IRM progress report,
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Albania_Second%20IRM%20Report_for%20public%20comment.pdf.

[3] APP, Bulletin No. 4, 1 February 2016, https://www.app.gov.al/ep/DF_DocumentViewer.aspx?id=e74ba95d-41c0-43ed-9df6-fcdf288185b7.

[4] IRM progress report,
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Albania_Second%20IRM%20Report_for%20public%20comment.pdf.

[5] See section at
http://akzm.gov.al/index.php?option=com_k2&view=itemlist&layout=category&task=category&id=5&Itemid=289&lang=en
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[6]http://akzm.gov.al/index.php?option=com_k2&view=itemlist&layout=category&task=category&id=5&Itemid=289&lang=en.

Cluster 4: Simplified Customs Services

This cluster is composed of two commitments, as follows:

Commitment 2.3. Single Window

Commitment 2.3. Text: *In order to facilitate and accelerate the procedures for trade in the custom system, the General Directorate of Customs will centralize the administration of requests and procedures through a single window. The utilization of a single window will reduce the time of administrative practices, will reduce the cost and inevitably increase the transparency level. The interface between private sector and the General Directorate of Customs it will be a web portal interface. The institutional cooperation and coordination of actions will be in real time. The single window will raise the transparency level of transactions between the administration and the private sector.*

Responsible institution: General Directorate of Customs

Supporting institution(s): N/A

Start date: 2014   End date: 2016

Commitment 3.4. E-document

Commitment 3.4. Text: *Forms and documents to be completed for different procedures in the customs system are not only complicated but also numerous. In the aim to facilitate the access to the customs system we shall introduce the e-document. Not only will we facilitate the use of different forms and documents, but we will also contribute in the establishment of a paperless environment. The provision of public services in electronic way through e-documents and e-forms will facilitate the procedures for citizens and business, by reducing the costs and time employed for this services, it will also improve the degree of access to information for citizens thus making the procedures more transparent. E-documents will:*

1. *Improve public access by making selected documents, transparency and valid information for citizens available online.*

2. *Streamline citizen services by allowing licensees to submit electronic documents with their online applications.*

3. *Increase efficiency by eliminating filing, retrieving and re-filing of paper documents, and reducing time spent searching for misplaced paperwork.*

4. *Reduce the cost and clutter associated with manual, paper-based processes, and the printing and archiving of paper records.*

5. *Allow the public to submit electronic documents with online complaint forms.*

Responsible institution: General Directorate of Customs

Supporting institution(s): N/A

Start date: 2014   End date: 2016

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion				Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsens	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
2.3. Single Window			✔		Unclear					✔				✔				✔			
														✔							
3.4. E-document			✔		Unclear				✔					✔				✔			
														✔							

Commitments Aim:
Customs procedures in Albania have been costly and time consuming both for private operators and for the customs administrators processing the customs applications.

The Single Window and e-document commitments aim at improving custom services for operators in Albania's trade exchange system. The commitments accomplish this by reducing costs and facilitating procedures both for economic operators and for the customs administration. The Single Window was meant to provide an interconnected system (telematic network) that enables state institutions to exchange communications and files (e-document).

Status

Commitment 2.3
Midterm: Limited

Limited progress was made to implement the Single Window. The General Directorate of Customs has set up a working group for the project, which was still in an early phase of development at the action plan's one-year mark. The government expected delays in the project because of technical issues. In order for the Single Window to work, additional investments were required in other state institutions' ICT systems.

End of term: Limited

No additional progress was made on implementing the Single Window in 2015–2016. The government's end-of-term self-assessment report (September 2016) does not mention any new developments except a training session on the Single Window project. The training session, which took place in June 2016, focused on developing the knowledge and capacities of a core team of Albanian experts for the planning, preparation, and implementation of the Single Window project.[1]

Commitment 3.4
Midterm: Limited

Interviewed representatives of the General Directorate of Customs reported that the terms of reference for the e-document tender have been detailed. The National Agency for Information Society was tasked with opening the tender procedure, which, by the time of drafting the IRM midterm report, was not published.

End of term: Limited

No additional progress was noted on the implementation of the e-document commitment during 2015–2016. The government's end-of-term self-assessment report states that "development and implementation of a project based on paperless customs is completed." However, the paperless project referred to in the self-assessment report is a different project, which pertains to internal operations within the General Directorate of Customs. The e-document commitment is about the electronic provision of public services through e-documents and e-forms. This was meant to replace the so-called "postman" system for business operators, simplifying and streamlining the process. Currently, business operators have to visit multiple institutions in order to obtain official documents for customs. But the new service is not in operation. The government's end-of-term self-assessment report notes that this commitment will require an amendment to legislation.

Did it open government?
The IRM midterm report found that these commitments were irrelevant to OGP values of access to information, civic participation, and public accountability. The limited implementation progress has not demonstrated any early results that could contribute to opening government.[2]

Carried forward?

These commitments were not carried forward in the new action plan.

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[1] United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), http://www.unece.org/tradewelcome/trademeetings/trade-workshops/workshops/2016/workshop-on-establishing-an-albanian-single-window/doc.html#/.
[2] IRM progress report,
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Albania_Second%20IRM%20Report_for%20public%20comment.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

Commitment clusters are derived from the original OGP action plan. This report is based on an analysis of the commitments, including a desk review of governmental programs, draft laws and regulations, governmental decrees, and the government's midterm and end-of-term self-assessment reports. The IRM researcher also relied upon interviews and other written input from government officials and nongovernmental stakeholders, as well as media coverage analysis.

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

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