

MOLDOVA

INFUSING MOLDOVA'S DEVELOPMENT AGENDA WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF OPEN GOVERNMENT

The government of the Republic of Moldova embarked on its e-Transformation agenda in 2010. This agenda involves a commitment to implementing Information Communication Technologies (ICT) with the aim of transforming the economy and governance. This will be achieved by driving sustainable economic growth based on strengthened competitiveness, by building strong human capital, by facilitating social inclusion and by improving public sector governance. Following eight years of communist rule, the new pro-European government prioritised civil society participation and the promotion of democracy and human rights in its broader development agenda. Moldova joined the Open Government Partnership in 2011 in order to enhance collaboration between citizens, civil society, the private sector and government with a view to promoting and ensuring open and innovative government

through the use of ICT. The Open Government Initiative is embedded in the Governance e-Transformation agenda.

The e-Government Centre, an institution of State Chancellery responsible for the e-Transformation and Open Government Agendas, presented the draft Action Plan at the first round of public consultations.

'We decided to present the first draft in order to start from something rather than nothing. During the consultations we were open to completely revising the draft in response to the wishes of civil society.'

reflects Irina Tisacova, Open Government Coordinator at the e-Government Centre. The consultation process with civil society organisations was intense,

involving round-table and tête-à-tête meetings. 'The issues related to open government were still emerging in Moldova, and the level of understanding, awareness and capacity of civil society organisations in this field was low. Civil society considers the approach taken by the e-Government Centre to have been appropriate to the context,' says Veronica Cretu, coordinator of the working group on e-Government/Open Government within the National Participation Council, a group set up soon after Moldova approved its Action Plan in April 2012.

Stringent timelines were another constraint. Veronica Cretu highlights that, 'Ideally, the consultation process should have had several phases – a pre-elaboration stage to raise general awareness, consultation phase and finally a decision-making stage in which all feedback is considered and stakeholders have an opportunity

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to “vote” on the final version of the proposed Action Plan.’ The consultation process stretched from the end of January to mid-March 2012, during which time civil society was invited to participate in all online and offline consultations. These included round-table meetings, the sharing of documents via emails, interviews and the use of social media networks. The OGP draft action plan was published on the government’s participation platform (www.particip.gov.md) and comments and suggestions were invited. National and local organisations in the fields of access to information, public transparency, government accountability, the Youth Council, education, health and justice commented. The government analysed the comments and suggestions and included most of them in the final draft of the action plan. Around 130 representatives of civil society took part in the consultation meetings and between 50–75% of civil society

inputs were included in the final Action Plan. Says Irina,

‘The government did not meet the participants’ expectations that a summary of the feedback received would be provided, a document itemising the comments reflected in the last draft of the action plan and stating why other comments were not included. The government will take this into consideration in the next round of consultations.’

The Moldovan government collaborated with international development partners in order to raise awareness of the Open Government Partnership and to involve as many participants in the consultations as possible. The Soros Foundation – Moldova, the World Bank and FHI 360 contributed to the promotion of OGP by helping to organise consultative meetings, conferences and awareness

sessions. They built local capacity through training workshops, undertook research and provided technical support and guidance to both government and CSOs.

The government raised awareness of the initiative by employing a number of online and offline strategies. It disseminated information at national and local level through the international development partners, through a coalition of local authorities, radio and TV spots, social media and special events. Youth aged 16-30 years, which make up 30% of the country’s population of 3.5 million, were specifically targeted at the Open Innovation Week in May 2012 – a series of events that brought local stakeholders from both the public and private sectors together with civil society and international experts. They participated in skills-building activities and awareness-raising events around open data, leveraging it to achieve

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social and commercial value. 'We learnt that not only does the government have to be open, but civil society has to build its capacity to analyse all the information and data that's being released,' says Victoria Vlad, an economic researcher with the Expert Grup.

To date, most active NGOs involved in open government processes are concentrated in the capital city. 'Most decisions, strategies and consultations stop at the border of Chisinau,' says Victoria. The mechanisms to reach out to NGOs in the rural areas remain limited and the links between central and local authorities could be improved. Various citizen engagement methods are needed to increase participation and levels of trust. 'We need to explore new and innovative ways of improving the collaboration between local authorities and CSOs in local development committees,' Irina suggests.

Efforts to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan are continuing through the e-Government/Open Government Working Group, which has ten CSO representatives. One of the key tasks of the group, in addition to monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan, is to identify opportunities to promote, build capacity for, disseminate and integrate open government values and principles in different sectors of development. In December 2012, the group organised an Open Education event with key relevant stakeholders, addressing education from the perspective of the core values and principles of open government. During 2013, the working group plans to elaborate capacity-building modules on open government, integrating them into on-going programmes with local public authorities, youth, and other civil society organisations.

Key lessons that have emerged from the OGP processes to date include:

the need to increase awareness and collaboration with citizens; the need to improve communication with national and local stakeholders; and the need to infuse all sectors with the principles of open government. Ultimately, the delivery of the commitments remains key to building and fostering the citizen's trust in the government. People are more willing to cooperate when they can see results, however small these may be. The Open Government Partnership in the Republic of Moldova is not a stand-alone initiative; it is closely connected to the broader national e-Transformation agenda. Veronica Cretu concludes that, 'it is important to respect and adhere to the OECD recommendations for citizen engagement, so that the elaboration, consultation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Action Plan are conducted in an open, transparent and inclusive manner.'

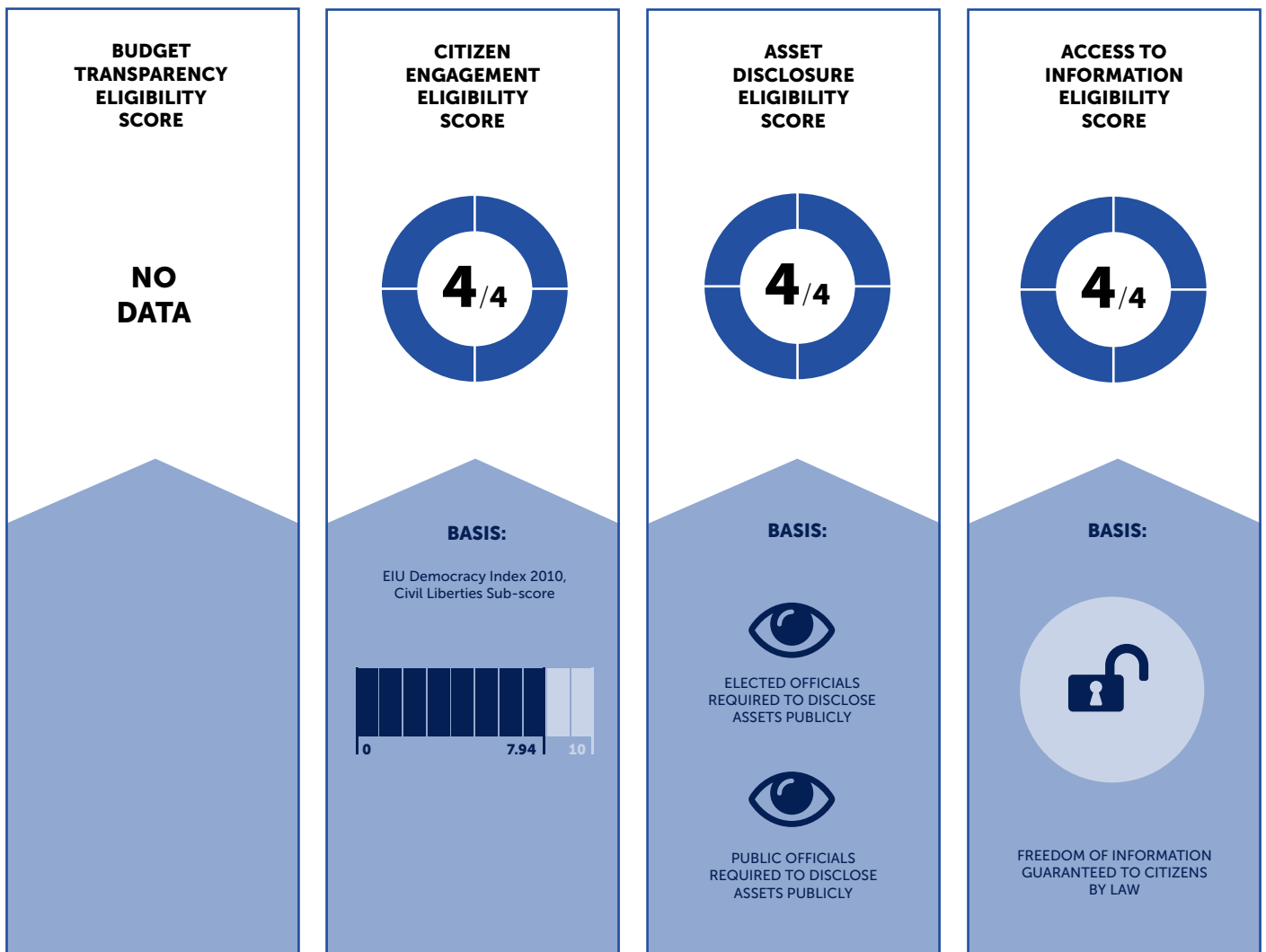
🔗 For more information or to get in touch with one of the people interviewed, please e-mail nvaart@hivos.nl.

OGP MEMBER SINCE:
April 2012

CURRENT STAGE:
1st Action Plan

OGP SITE:
<http://www.opengovpartners.org/md/>

MOLDOVA OGP ELIGIBILITY DATASHEET



TOTAL OGP ELIGIBILITY SCORE: **12/12**

