Of the seven, four organisations indicated their interest in participating and became members of the Operations Team. Government thereafter invited inputs, suggestions and ideas from civil society for the Action Plan by posting notifications on the e-government, government and Ministry of Finance portals. "Nobody Civil society is quite divided in Montenegro and government was probably afraid of getting criticised for inviting the wrong NGOs."

In December, the Embassy invited seven NGOs working in the areas of democratisation, rule of law, human rights, transparency and civic education to the first meeting about the OGP. For government, this was a way of ensuring that the selection process was objective. Milica recalls, "The initiative gives us a significant incentive to implement the concept of good government and for Montenegro to become part of the global network exchanging knowledge and experience," adds Sladjana. For civil society, the opportunity for government to gain a better image internationally and for NGO participation to lend greater legitimacy to these processes provided further motivation to join.

Montenegro joined the OGP in September 2011, following the participation of the former Prime Minister, Igor Luksic, in the inaugural meeting in New York. It was an opportunity for government to intensify its cooperation with civil society and to further the aspirations of transparency. The initiative gives us a significant incentive to implement the concept of good government and for Montenegro to become part of the global network exchanging knowledge and experience," adds Sladjana. For civil society, the opportunity for government to gain a better image internationally and for NGO participation to lend greater legitimacy to these processes provided further motivation to join.

The government elected to implement the entire process of developing the Action Plan in cooperation with the US Embassy in Montenegro. In December, the Embassy invited seven NGOs working in the areas of democratisation, rule of law, human rights, transparency and civic education to the first meeting about the OGP. For government, this was a way of ensuring that the selection process was objective. Milica recalls,

'We have learned that it is very difficult to raise awareness of the importance of participation and to engage citizens constructively in government policy-making processes,' says Sladjana Pavlovic of the Ministry of Finance and General Secretary of the Operational Team for the OGP. The OGP process in Montenegro has highlighted the lack of sufficient knowledge of OG concepts and principles within society: of openness, transparency and participation. "Openness is not the dominant concept. We’ve been so used to a closed system; citizens don’t demand anything because they don’t know these values and they don’t recognise them as being important," says Milica Kovacevic of the Centre for Democratic Transition (CDT) and a member of the OGP Operational Team.

The OGP CIVIL SOCIETY HUB
'Less attention will be paid to the OGP unless we can argue that open data can lead to increased savings and more efficient services.' - Marija Novkovic, UNDP
‘This time, we want to be completely open and more transparent about the process. All task-force meetings will be announced and the media will be invited to attend.’

- Milica Kovacevic of the Centre for Democratic Transition (CDT) and a member of the OGP Operational Team

The consultation process be broadened to include many more NGOs and the public. There is now a much better understanding of the rules and principles of the OGP. ‘This time, we want to be completely open and more transparent about the process. All task-force meetings will be announced and the media will be invited to attend,’ says Milica. And from the government’s perspective, the challenge remains how to tap into the wide range of instruments to communicate with civil society, which is itself a rich source of very constructive ideas. Sladjana pleads,

‘We want to show that government is keen to listen and is open to new ideas and opinions. It is important for citizens to engage constructively, not just criticize us.’

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

- **Budget Transparency Eligibility Score:** NO DATA
- **Citizen Engagement Eligibility Score:** 3/4
  - **Basis:** EIU Democracy Index 2010, Civil Liberties Sub-score
- **Asset Disclosure Eligibility Score:** 4/4
  - **Basis:** Elected officials required to disclose assets publicly
- **Access to Information Eligibility Score:** 4/4
  - **Basis:** Freedom of information guaranteed to citizens by law

**Total OGP Eligibility Score:** 11/12