

BULGARIA
MIDTERM SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT
NATIONAL ACTION PLAN 2014 - 2016¹

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The second National Action Plan of the Republic of Bulgaria under the Open Government Partnership Initiative was adopted by force of Decision No 530 of the Council of Ministers of 21 July 2014. The commitments and measures in the Plan are focused on the following areas: fiscal transparency; legislative changes aimed at improving transparency and accountability in government; establishing better mechanisms for involving the stakeholders (business and civic organizations) in the policy-making processes; providing public information in open format to encourage the administration to apply innovative evidence-based policy-making and to provide an additional channel for civil society in exerting pressure and exercising control on government.

Following the general elections held in 2014 and the formation of the new government of the Republic of Bulgaria the Deputy Prime Minister for Public Administration and Coalition Policy was designated as responsible for the coordination of Bulgaria's participation in the Open Government Partnership Initiative in accordance with Decision No 8 of Protocol No 48 of the Council of Ministers of 19 November 2014. In February 2015 a decision was taken for the second National Action Plan of Bulgaria to be revised by adding new commitments reflecting the new government priorities, reinforcing the expected impact of the measures in the Plan and contributing to the establishment of a sustainable culture of transparency and accountability of the public institutions. In the period February - April both the line ministries and CSOs (more than 20) were asked to submit proposals for new commitments. The proposals were published for public consultation on the Portal for Public Consultations www.strategy.bg and discussed with the stakeholders. Consequently, additional measures were included in the Plan by force of a Decision of the Council of Ministers of 01 July 2015 relating to improving the integrity of the high-ranking public officials, increasing the usability of the financial data published by the government bodies, applying new technologies in the government procurement processes, more effective operation of the Bulgarian courts, etc.

A detailed description of the relevance of Bulgaria's OGP commitments with the four core open government principles and the five grand OGP challenges is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Commitment	Measure	Core OGP Principle	Grand OGP Challenge
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¹ The Midterm Self-Assessment Report presents the progress made in the implementation of the commitments laid down originally in the Plan (by force of a Decision of the Council of Ministers of 21 July 2014) as the new commitments were added on 1 July 2015 and are at a very early stage of implementation to report concrete results and measure impact.

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<p>4.1 CLOSE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE ADMINISTRATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amendments to the Normative Acts Law (NAL) 2. Improved procedure for participation of citizens and citizens' organizations in public consultations 3. Amendments to the Non-Profit Legal Entities Act (NLEA). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amendments to NAL provide for the establishment of a legally binding mechanism for the participation of the stakeholders in the decision-making process by introducing an obligation to carry out impact assessments at the stage of drafting and adopting legislation. • The publication online of information about the work of the consultative councils and the development of clear rules for the selection of NGO representatives to take part in the councils' work ensures higher level of accountability of the public institutions as well as encourages more active citizen participation. • The amendments to NLEA are aimed at facilitating the registration of CSOs as well as introducing more structured civic participation process by establishing a Council for the Development of Civil Society. 	<p>The implementation of the measures contributes to improving the partnership and dialog between the administration and the citizens and to increasing the integrity of the public institutions by establishing mechanisms and procedures ensuring more active control by the citizens of the effectiveness and integrity of institutions.</p>
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<p>4.2 IMPROVING PUBLIC SERVICES AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Openness, transparency and accountability of the processes related to government debt management 2. Increasing the accessibility, intelligibility and comprehension of the public information published by the Ministry of Finance (MF) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure 1 results in transparency and accountability of the government policy relating to the government debt as well as improved access for a broader circle of users to this information which in turn boosts a more active participation in controlling the implementation of the policy. • Providing more information which is accessible and understandable relates directly to the efforts to create a transparent and accountable administration while at the same time allowing the stakeholders to participate in an informed way in the policy-making process and exert better control on policy implementation. 	<p>This commitment addresses the challenges relating to improving public services and more effective management of public resources. The improved accessibility and intelligibility of the information about fiscal policies makes it possible for the administration to more effectively manage the costs for public services while at the same time equipping the stakeholders with control tools to monitor the quality of service and the spending of public funds.</p>
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<p>4.2 IMPROVING PUBLIC SERVICES AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amendments to the Normative Acts Law introducing SME-test and Draft Methodology for SME test 2. Adoption of Amendments to the Mineral Resources Act (MRA) 3. Adoption of an Ordinance on the terms and conditions for exercising control and approving the control results relating to the permits for prospecting and extraction or extraction only, and granted concession contracts for mining mineral resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SME-test is included as an element of the overall impact assessment thus creating a channel by which the business community can actively participate in the legislative process. • The amendments to the MRA provide for the establishment of a public register of operators which creates guarantees for improved transparency and accountability of the administration in the area of mineral resources management. The new legal provisions also ensure more active participation and public control of the mineral resources management activities, including mine reclamation. 	<p>The measures aim at improving the public services. Mineral resources management is a sensitive issue for the local communities and the legislative changes make it possible for the local stakeholders and environmentalists to be actively involved in exercising control over these centralized government services. The obligation to carry out SME-tests as part of the impact assessment of new legislation contributes to improving the overall business environment and ensuring better regulation and services for the business.</p>
<p>4.3 MORE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC FUNDS</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft State Fees Act 2. Draft Specialized Methodology for Impact Assessment of the introduction and change of state fees 3. Draft Methodology for calculation of fees 4. Draft Uniform Tariff of Fees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing clear public procedures for setting state fees directly results in more transparency and accountability of government. 	<p>The implementation of this commitment results in a more accountable public administration, reduced financial burden for businesses and citizens, improved public services and better management of public resources by limiting the arbitrary fee-setting which in turn led to restricted access to services for certain social groups. The creation of an uniform cost-based methodology for calculating state fees contributes to improving the service provision effectiveness of the administration and to the better management of the services costs.</p>

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4.4 OPENNESS OF THE ADMINISTRATION	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Amendments to the Access to Public Information Act2. Drafting technical guidelines for the provision of public information held by institutions in an open format3. Prioritizing the information to be released in an open format4. Starting the procedure for Bulgaria's accession to the Convention on Access to Official Documents of the Council of Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open data is a powerful tool for ensuring transparency and accountability in government.• The pro-active publication of information in open format creates opportunities for a new type of participation in policy-making and policy implementation based on innovative approaches and the new technologies.• Open data is also a tool which contributes to the administration employing new technologies in its work and applying innovative approaches to evidence-based policy-making.	The coherent and sustainable policy for releasing open data and promoting its reuse increases the integrity of the public institutions by allowing a large number of stakeholders to exert permanent control of their operation without restricted access to the data they need. It also establishes a new type of relationship between the suppliers of data and the users in which the users could be directly involved in creating new and improving the existing public services .
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2. NATIONAL ACTION PLAN PROCESS

A. Consultation during NAP development:

In April 2014 an inter-ministerial working group was established in accordance with an Order issued by the Minister of Regional Development tasked with developing Bulgaria's second National Action Plan under the Open Government Partnership Initiative.

The inter-ministerial working group was composed of representatives of the Council of Ministers, Ministry of Regional Development, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Agriculture and Foods, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Environment and Waters, Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Transport, Information Technologies and Telecommunications, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Science, and Ministry of Youth and Sports. Representatives of nongovernmental organizations, citizens and other stakeholders were invited to take part in the NAP2 development process.

During the development of the second National Action Plan joint working meetings were held with representatives of NGOs and the members of the inter-ministerial working group at which the civil organizations made proposals for specific commitments and underlying measures to

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be included in the new Plan. Minutes from the meetings and a summary of the recommendations were drafted following each meeting and disseminated. A weakness of the process was the lack of feedback on the proposals that were not accepted which had demotivating effect in relation to the pro-active involvement of the CSOs.

The recommendations of the independent IRM researcher included in the Assessment Report for the first National Action Plan of Bulgaria 2012-2013 were also taken into account in the development of the second Plan. The public officials discussed each of the recommendations and agreed that only the ones which were feasible should be included in the second Plan.

Proposals for new commitments and specific measures were submitted by the following NGOs: Access to Information Program, NGO Links, Foundation Obshtestvo.BG, an assistant professor at Sofia University, an open data activist, etc. The proposals were mainly related to amendments to the Access to Public Information Act to provide for a proactive release of information as well as to the establishment of an open data portal.

All proposals made were discussed in the joint meetings thus ensuring active collaboration between the administration and the citizens in the development of the Plan. The Plan was then uploaded on the Public Consultations Portal www.strategy.bg, and all stakeholders could make comments and additions to it prior to its approval by the Council of Ministers.

Challenges:

- i. The collaborative process of developing the OGP Action Plan lacks clear structure which poses obstacles to maintaining a meaningful dialog about the measures in the Plan. The lack of an established consultation procedure in relation to the Plan's development and monitoring (consultation format, rules for participation, selection criteria, feedback obligations, schedule) creates difficulties for both the administration and the other stakeholders (NGOs, business community). As a result the involvement of the stakeholders is limited both in terms of quantity, and quality.
- ii. Bulgaria's participation in the Open Government Partnership Initiative should be more widely publicized as the initiative remains largely unknown not only to the citizens and the business community, but also to some public officials. Traditional communication tools such as email, official letters were used during the development of the Plan but they were not part of a broader and coordinated information campaign involving a variety of communication channels (special events, social media, existing joint forums between the government and civil society) to reach different audiences.
- iii. The frequent changes of the ministerial OGP contact persons results in lack of consistency in the implementation of commitments laid down in approved strategic documents.
- iv. Some of the measures included in the second National Action Plan, mostly in the area of fiscal transparency, are ongoing activities of the administration - for instance

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“Implementation of the Government Debt Management Strategy 2015 -2017”;
“Development, approval by the Council of Ministers and implementation of the Government Debt Management Strategy 2015 - 2017”, etc. Efforts should be made to design commitments and measures that are unique for the Initiative which could be one-off actions bringing sustained positive impact in terms of good governance.

B. Consultation during implementation:

Similarly to the development of the Plan the approach to monitoring and evaluating the Plan implementation still lacks coherence and consistency. Currently it relies on the NGOs and other stakeholders being the proactive party, but given the low level of awareness about the Initiative and the lack of a clear cooperation mechanism a very small number of representatives of CSOs/other stakeholders take part in the monitoring process.

In order to overcome the above weaknesses and challenges the government is currently developing a platform for government transparency and active involvement of the stakeholders in a systematic way in the policy-making process in general, and in the development and implementation of Bulgaria’s OGP agenda in particular. The platform will set up the overall framework for the transparency and accountability policies of the government and will provide consistency of the interactions between the government and the stakeholders - civil society, business community, media, etc. A permanent partnership mechanism will be established with all its parameters being consulted in advance with all interested parties to ensure the sustainability of the format and the active involvement of all stakeholders. A combination of complementary communication channels will be used to make sure that a good number of representatives of the NGOs, business sector, etc. are motivated and encouraged to participate.

The activities relating to presenting the platform to the public and seeking feedback on it as well as to establishing a permanent partnership forum will start in September 2015.

C. Briefly describe the consultation or comment period for the Self-Assessment Report.

This report together with a schedule of the self-assessment process were published on the Public Consultations Portal www.strategy.bg. All stakeholders were able to make comments and proposals within a period of 14 days.

All comments were taken into consideration when drafting the final version of the report.

3. IRM RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations made by the independent IRM researcher in the Assessment Report for the first National Action Plan served as a basis for the development of the second Plan. One of the recommendations was for special attention to be paid to the formulation of the

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commitments and measures and efforts were made to select commitments which are concrete and whose impact is measurable. The members of the inter-ministerial working group discussed the proposals made in the Report and agreed that only the feasible ones should be included in the new Plan. Consequently, the following recommendations were laid down as measures in the new Plan:

1. Implementing the NGO Development Strategy and establishment of an internal independent funding mechanism for CSOs;
2. Publication of more information about the operation of the consultative councils within the different public institutions.

The independent researcher was also invited to take part in the discussion forums for the new Plan and her contribution was accounted for in the final version of the Plan.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL ACTION PLAN COMMITMENTS

Commitment Completion Template	
Commitment No 4.1 CLOSE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE ADMINISTRATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY Measure 1. Amendments to the Normative Acts Law Measure 2. Improved procedure for the participation of citizens and CSOs in public consultations Measure 3. Amendments to the Non-Profit Legal Entities Act	
Lead implementing agency	Administration of the Council of Ministers
Name of responsible person from implementing agency	Kalina Konstantinova Milena Nedeva
Title, Department	Advisers to the political cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister in charge of coalition policy and public administration
Email	k.konstantinova@government.bg m.nedeva@government.bg
Phone	02/940 2001 02/940 3634
	Government <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Ministry of Justice▪ Administration of Parliament▪ central administration

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<p>Other actors involved</p>	<p>CSOs, private sector, working groups, multilaterals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Institute for Market Economy ▪ Center for Impact Assessment of Legislation ▪ Bulgarian Center for Non-Profit Law ▪ Transparency International ▪ Open Society Institute
<p>Main Objective</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased participation of citizens in the decision-making process; ▪ Improved partnership between the administration, civil society and businesses via well-functioning consultative councils which actively publicize their work.
<p>Brief Description of Commitment</p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amendments to the Normative Acts Law: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proportional adaptation of the compulsory consultation period from 14 to 30 days according to the significance of the issue and the stakeholders and following the best European practice; ▪ Involving civil society at an early stage of the legislative process via introducing the practice of impact assessment for new legislation; 2. Improved procedure for citizen and CSO participation in public consultations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publishing online information about: composition of the councils, invitations, agenda, minutes, decisions taken, regular reports - on the consultative councils portal – www.saveti.government.bg; ▪ Clear rules and procedures, criteria for selection of NGO representatives in the councils; 3. Amendments to the Non-Profit Legal Entities Act – establishment of Civil Society Development Council in accordance with the Civil Society Development Strategy 2012-2015.

<p>Relevance</p>	<p>1. The Bill for Amendments to the Normative Acts Law contributes significantly to achieving the OGP objectives. The increased period for public consultations opens new opportunities for citizen participation, transparency and accountability. The new obligation provided for in the law for the public institutions to publish draft legislation/ regulation on one single web site (the Public Consultations Portal) not only facilitates participation and increases transparency, but puts the focus on innovative tools to be used in the interaction between civil society and the public authorities. The provision for drafting and publishing online of feedback on the contributions by the participants in the public consultations fully reflects the OGP objectives as well.</p> <p>2. Improved procedure for citizen participation in public consultations: www.saveti.government.bg - The publication of up-to-date information about the composition and work of the councils and the establishment of clear rules for the involvement of CSOs meets all OGP objectives - transparency, accountability, citizen participation and technological innovation.</p> <p>3. The amendments to the Non-Profit Legal Entities Acts also fulfill the OGP objectives as they are designed to facilitate the institution of civic organizations and ensure greater transparency of the government policies for the development of civil society.</p>
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Ambition

1. The Draft Bill for amendments to the Normative Acts Law are a fundamental step towards improving the process of drafting, coordinating and adopting new legislation and as such shows the ambition of the authorities to considerably change the manner in which laws are created. The practice of impact assessment (IA) which directly contributes in more transparent institutions and more active citizen participation in the decision-making process is laid down for the first time as a binding legal requirement.

The extended period for public consultations creates more opportunities for the citizens and their organizations to participate and make full use of the existing expertise and capacity and hence results in better quality positions on the proposed legislation and policies.

The obligation for the executive and the local authorities to publish all draft legislation/regulation in one single point (the Public Consultations Portal) provides the public with multiple tools for monitoring the government, conducting analyses and disseminating information to the stakeholders with regards to the policies implemented.

The provision to draft and publish feedback on the contributions received increases the credibility of the institutions thus stimulating more active participation in the public consultations.

2. Improved procedure for citizen participation in public consultations: www.saveti.government.bg

- The measures under this commitment are aimed at establishing a uniform, structured and transparent practice of citizen participation thus preventing unequal treatment and arbitrariness in the selection process.

3. The amendments to the Non-Profit Legal Entities Act show the ambition of the government to ensure that civil society organizations are provided with a collaborative mechanism for monitoring and influencing all policies related to the development of the third sector in Bulgaria - Council for Development of Civil Society.

- The changes will make it possible for the organizations to directly contribute to policy-making in the area of civil society development and will ensure that they have the necessary resources to do so.

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Completion level	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	
			X		
Description of the results	<p>The Draft Bill for amendments to the Normative Acts law has been developed by a task force comprised of representatives of the executive and legislative branches and civil society experts. An impact assessment of the Draft Bill was carried out and published and the Bill was presented for public consultation accompanied by all additional documents such as the composition of the task force, the impact assessment report, the rationale for the proposed amendments, etc. The Draft Bill provides for obligatory impact assessments to be carried out for all proposed new legislation and lays down requirements for improved public consultation process through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ extended period for public consultations on draft legislation from 14 to 30 days; ▪ imposing an obligation for the executive and the local authorities to conduct online public consultations in one single point - the Public Consultation Portal; ▪ imposing obligation to provide feedback on all online contributions in the public consultations. <p>The Draft Bill was approved by the Committee on Legal Affairs of Parliament and is to put forward for discussion by the plenary in Parliament.</p> <p>2. The Draft Bill for amendments to the Non-Profit Legal Entities Act was published for consultation on the Public Consultations Portal together with partial impact assessment and several public events were held to discuss the proposed changes. The events were attended by representatives of civil society.</p>				
End date	2016				
Next Steps	Approval of the Draft Bill for amendments to the Normative Acts Law by Parliament and of the Draft Bill for amendments to the Non-Profit Legal Entities Act by the Council of Ministers.				

Additional information
Once the two draft bills are adopted by Parliament the secondary legislation will be drafted.

Commitment Completion Template	
<p>Commitment No 4.2 IMPROVING PUBLIC SERVICES AND THE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK</p> <p>Open process of government debt management Measure 1. Implementation of the Government Debt Management Strategy; Measure 2. Development and adoption of new Strategy for 2015-2017; Measure 3. Publication on the website of the Ministry of Finance of a Government Debt Newsletter Measure 4. Annual review of government debt Measure 5. Publication of official data on consolidated debt and the state guarantees</p>	
Lead implementing agency	Ministry of Finance
Name of responsible person from implementing agency	Vanya Vacheva
Title, Department	Head of Department “Strategies, analyses and statistical reports” at the Government Debt and Financial Markets Directorate
Email	v.vacheva@minfin.bg
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	Government Yes

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Other actors involved	CSOs, private sector, working groups, multilaterals	Yes
Main Objective		Publication and granting access to the documents and data relating to government debt management and increasing transparency in relation to the debt management policy of the government.

Brief Description of
Commitment

The Government Debt Management Strategy is developed as per art.16, para 1 of the Government Debt Act and is updated annually as per Art.72 of the Public Finances Act. Its main function is to outline the government debt management policy and the instruments for its implementation.

The monthly government debt newsletter represents a monthly report containing an analysis of the status, structure and evolution of government debt and state guarantees for the preceding month and contains comparative data visualized in tables and figures.

The official Review of Government Debt is a compilation of analyses of different scope and content, tables and graphs, providing comprehensive information about the status, structure and evolution of government debt for a period of one year.

The documents are drafted and published on paper and on the web site of the Ministry of Finance

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<p>Relevance</p>	<p>The implementation of this commitment contributes to ensuring a high level of transparency, accountability, and predictability of the government debt management policies as well as unrestricted access for the stakeholders to the full information regarding the status and dynamics of government debt.</p>				
<p>Ambition</p>	<p>Citizens and stakeholders were provided with timely and accurate information about the government debt management policy.</p>				
<p>Completion level</p>	<p>Not started</p>	<p>Limited</p>	<p>Substantial</p>	<p>Completed</p>	
			<p>X</p>		

<p>Description of the results</p>	<p>The development of a Government Debt Management Strategy incorporates a number of stages resulting in the following specific outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - analysis of the key macroeconomic indicators; - analysis of the status and trends on the domestic and international capital markets; - analysis and assessment of the risks associated with the debt structure and the environment. <p>The publication of a monthly newsletter, annual review and information on consolidated debt on the website of the Ministry of Finance requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ongoing monitoring of the amount, structure and evolution of government debt and guarantees; - aggregation of data and compilation of datasets; - comparative analysis; - periodic summary and processing of data.
<p>End Date</p>	<p>Ongoing as per the provisions of the law</p>
<p>Next Steps</p>	
<p>Additional information</p>	

Commitment Completion Template

Commitment No 4.2**IMPROVING PUBLIC SERVICE AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK**

Measure 1. Survey among users relating to the usability and intelligibility of the information published by the Ministry of Finance

Measure 2. Developing a concept for increasing the usability of the information published by the MF

Measure 3. Implementation of the concept

Lead implementing agency	Ministry of Finance	
Name of responsible person from implementing agency	Nadezhda Kasabova, Chief Expert Lilia Arabadjiiska, Junior Expert	
Title, Department	Public Relations Department, Public Relations and Protocol Directorate	
Email	n.kasabova@minfin.bg ; l.arabadzhiyska@minfin.bg	
Phone	02/9859 2085, 02/9859 2034	
Other actors involved	Government	Yes
	CSOs, private sector, working groups, multilaterals	Yes
Main Objective	Increased accessibility, intelligibility and understanding of the information published by the MF.	
Brief Description of Commitment	The commitment includes the conduction of a survey among users to assess the accessibility and intelligibility of the information published by the MF, technological upgrade and improved content of the official website of the Ministry of Finance.	

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<p>Relevance</p>	<p>The objective as relating to improving public services and more effective management of public funds was to develop a concept containing specific measures towards increased accessibility and intelligibility of the information published by the MF. In November 2014 a concept was developed for the overhaul of the MF website involving adaptation of the graphic design to ensure compatibility with the new browser versions, including compatibility with mobile devices; update of the content structure in accordance with the new legislation; further development of the “Buyer Profile” module in compliance with the new provisions of the Public Procurement Act (in force from 1 October 2014) and introduction of a new Open Data section in view of the upcoming amendments to the Access to Public Information Act providing for the release of public information in open format.</p>				
<p>Ambition</p>	<p>The complete overhaul of the website is an ambitious task of the unit responsible for the MF website as it entails taking into account the changing needs of the users and ensuring easy and immediate access to a wide variety of data with different specificity. Improving website functionality and the intelligibility of information is an ongoing process which involves constant monitoring and processing of user feedback to further enhance the content and usefulness of the information.</p>				
<p>Completion level</p>	<p>Not Started</p>	<p>Limited</p>	<p>Substantial</p>	<p>Completed</p>	
				<p>X</p>	

Description of the results

At the beginning of January 2015 a survey was published on the MF website aimed at collecting feedback and proposals from the users for improvement of the official site and facilitate access to information for the citizens and businesses. The survey was ongoing at the time of this report was drafted (July 2015).

As of 8 July 2015 the new website of the Ministry of Finance was officially launched. It boasts a user-friendly design which is developed in such a way as to adapt to the device used and fit content to the respective resolution - the website is developed to fit the screen width. An entirely new mobile version of the site was deployed for users who prefer to browse via smartphones.

The visual design of the website includes new color schemes and new menus. New and important information previously hidden in the site pages is now published on the landing page.

A separate section "Draft New Legislation" is created allowing the users easy access to public consultations and making it easier for them to submit their comments and proposals. This section is aimed at encouraging the participation of citizens, businesses and CSOs in the policy-making and legislative process. The existing legislation is systematized in a new section of the website "Current legislation" where users can search for documents by type.

The Services section is separated by an individual button and includes a list of specific services provided by the MF as well as contact information with the responsible unit. The Contacts section contains the phone numbers and emails of all directorates and contact details for the Minister. There is also a button Reporting Methodology on the landing page which will further contribute to providing accessible, well-organized and understandable information.

A new Open Data section is also created with data of the daily budget payments. Data in open format from the Central Municipal Debt Register is expected to be uploaded in this section.

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End Date	May 2015
Next Steps	Updating the website. The survey questionnaire will remain on the site until July 2015 to trace the changing attitudes of the users.
Additional information	

Commitment Completion Template	
<p>Commitment No 4.2 IMPROVING PUBLIC SERVICES AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK Measure 2. Draft SME-Test Methodology Measure 3. SME-Test Form</p>	
Lead implementing agency	Ministry of Economy
Name of responsible person from implementing agency	Milka Andreeva
Title, Department	Chief Expert in the Economic Policy Directorate
Email	m.andreeva@mee.government.bg
Phone	02/940 7534
	Government Zhelyaz Enev, Acting Director of the Economic Policy Directorate

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Other actors involved	CSOs, private sector, working groups, multilaterals	
Main Objective		Assessment of the impact of new legislation on SMEs

Brief Description of
Commitment

A key element of good regulation is carrying out impact assessment for new legislation. The impact assessment of new legislation on SMEs is a special type of analysis designed to evaluate the effects from new primary and secondary legislation on small and medium enterprises. This special assessment is called SME-test and is made integral part of the overall impact assessment. The Ministry of Economy drafted a Concept for the Implementation of SME-test and a graphic visualization of the SME-test mechanism and processes; and guidelines for the implementation of SME-test including a template form where the required data is systematized.

<p>Relevance</p>	<p>The SME-test meets the objective of improving public services by reducing the administrative burden for businesses.</p>				
<p>Ambition</p>	<p>The obligation to conduct an SME-test as part of the overall impact assessment for new legislation is key element of the efforts of the government to improve the business environment. It addresses the pressing need for systematic analysis of the effects of new legislative proposals on the small and medium enterprises.</p>				
<p>Completion Level</p>	<p>Not Started</p>	<p>Limited</p>	<p>Substantial</p>	<p>Completed</p>	
			<p>X</p>		

Description of the results	The SME - test is included by force of Decision No 549 of the Council of Ministers of 29.07.2014 into the Guidelines for carrying out impact assessments.
End Date	2015
Next Steps	Adoption of the amendments to the Normative Acts Law by Parliament and drafting of secondary legislation which includes the Methodology for conducting SME-test and the SME-test form. Inclusion of an SME-test obligation in the Internal Rules of Parliament. Conduction of trainings and provision of technical assistance to the administrative units for carrying out SME-tests.
Additional information	

Commitment Completion Template		
<p>Commitment No 4.2 IMPROVING PUBLIC SERVICES AND THE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK Measure 1: Adoption of amendments to the Mineral Resources Act Measure 2: Adoption of secondary legislation regulating the terms and conditions for controlling and reporting on the control outcomes in relation to the permits and concession contracts for prospecting and extraction of mineral resources</p>		
Lead implementing agency	Ministry of Energy	
Name of responsible person from implementing agency	Ivelina Mihailova	
Title, Department	Senior Inspector at the Mineral Resources and Concessions Directorate	
Email	i.mihaylova@me.government.bg	
Phone	02/9263 157	
Other actors involved	Government	Yes
	CSOs, private sector, working groups, multilaterals	The CSOs and businesses were consulted during the public consultation for the amendments to the Mineral Resources Act Multilaterals were involved as the Act transposes an EU Directive

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<p>Main Objective</p>	<p>Providing information about the extractive waste facilities, about events related to such facilities and about their environmental impact, about the procedures for issuing permits for category A extractive waste facilities and about the permits issued and the operators or the facilities; establishing mechanisms for citizen participation in the procedures for issuing the above permits; transparency of the control activities related to the permits for prospecting and extracting mineral resources.</p>
<p>Brief Description of Commitment</p>	<p>Adoption of legislative changes aimed at achieving the above objectives.</p>

Relevance

Measure 1:
pursuant to Art.22e, para 6 of the amended Mineral Resources Act the Minister of Energy shall maintain a public register of the operators and permits for category A extractive waste facilities providing access to this data and allowing the public to monitor the work of the administration in that area thus contributing to greater transparency and accountability;
pursuant to Art.22m, para 5 and 6 of the amendments to the Mineral Resources Act the Minister of Energy shall compile, publish on the website of the Ministry and update a list of closed extractive waste facilities, including abandoned facilities, which pose serious threats to the environment or which are likely in the mid-term or short-term to pose threat for human health or the environment;
pursuant to Art.22j when an application for a permit or for re-issuance of a permit for extractive waste facility is submitted the Minister of Energy shall provide access to the data in the application and create opportunities for the stakeholders and the local communities to participate in the issuance/re-issuance procedure by filing comments, questions and opinions. The provision of Art.22j of the amended Mineral Resources Act establishes a mechanism for citizen participation in the administrative procedure and improves the openness of the decision-making process.

Measure 2:
Laying down the specific terms and conditions for controlling the prospecting and extracting permits and concession contracts results in more transparent and accountable controlling institutions. The obligation to keep a public registry of the control outcomes ensures that the stakeholders have access to the data and could monitor more effectively the controlling body. Such a procedure is currently in place as laid down in the Concession Contracts Act but the new regulation is expected to contribute to better achieving the above objectives.

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<p style="text-align: center;">Ambition</p>	<p>Both measures are aimed at increasing transparency by providing access to information and encouraging the citizens to take more active part in the management of mineral resources, including extractive waste. Given that the mineral resources, including extractive waste, are located all over the country the new amendments contribute to stimulating participation by the local communities with respect to an issue that is sensitive to the citizens. The more active public control will in turn lead to more effective government policies in the area of mineral resources management.</p>				
<p style="text-align: center;">Completion Level</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Not Started</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Limited</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Substantial</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Completed</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Note:</p>
<p>Measure 1</p>				<p style="text-align: center;">X</p>	

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Measure 2	X				Bearing in mind that new amendments to the MRA are considered, a decision is to be taken as to whether to draft a new regulation (Ordinance) or include the planned provisions relating to the control of the permits for prospecting and extracting mineral resources in the amended Law itself.
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Description of the results	<p>Measure 1: The Draft Bill for amendments to the Mineral Resources Act was adopted by Parliament on 9 July 2015 and promulgated in the State Gazette on 24 July 2015/ SG No 56. The amendments took force on the date of their publication in the State Gazette. At this stage it is early to assess the impact and the benefits of the new provisions.</p>
End Date	<p>Measure 1: 24.07.2015 Measure 2: no deadline can be given at present</p>
Next Steps	<p>Re Measure 2: Drafting of a Bill for amendments to the Mineral Resources Act to include the provisions relating to the control of prospecting and extracting permits and the publicity of the control outcomes.</p>
<p>Additional information</p>	
<p>Re Measure 2: Drafting of a Bill for amendments to the Mineral Resources Act to include the provisions relating to the control of prospecting and extracting permits and the publicity of the control outcomes.</p>	

Commitment Completion Template

Commitment No 4.3

MORE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC RESOURCES

Measure 1. Draft Bill of a State Fees Act

Measure 2. Draft Methodology for Impact Assessment when Introducing New or Updating State Fees

Measure 3. Draft Methodology for Setting State Fees

Measure 4. Draft Uniform Fee Tariff

Lead implementing agency	Administration of the Council of Ministers	
Name of responsible person from implementing agency	Anton Gerunov Ivet Baeva	
Title, Department	Head of the Political Cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister for Public Administration and Coalition Policy Chief Expert in the Economic and Social Policy Directorate at the Council of Ministers	
Email	a.gerunov@government.bg ; I.Baeva@government.bg	
Phone	02/940 2802	
Other actors involved	Government	Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy
	CSOs, private sector, working groups, multilaterals	Economic think-tanks
Main Objective	Good governance through a new state fees policy providing for avoidance of unjustified financial charges for the citizens and the businesses. Implementing an effective and efficient social and economic policy by setting fees based on clear rules and procedures.	

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<p>Brief Description of Commitment</p>	<p>Under this commitment a Draft Bill of a State Fees Act and the related secondary legislation shall be drafted introducing the cost-based principle for setting government fees thus reducing the financial burden for businesses and citizens and laying down clear publicly announced rules and procedures for imposing government fees hence ensuring predictability for the users of the government services.</p>
<p>Relevance</p>	<p>The establishment of clear, uniform and public rules for setting government fees following a cost-based principle relates directly with the OGP objectives of providing access to information, improving the accountability of public institutions and increasing the openness of government. The changes planned to the State Fees Act and the secondary legislation thereto create opportunities for more effective control by the citizens and businesses during the procedure for setting fees and contribute to preventing negative practices such as imposing arbitrary fees exceeding the cost for the service. This in turn will result in a more accountable administration, reduced financial burden for citizen and businesses and improved public services. Laying down legal provisions for publicity of the methodology used for determining the government fees and for the amount of the fees is instrumental in overcoming the bad practice of the different institutions of charging different fees for the same services which limits the access of certain social groups/in certain regions to the services and increases the corruption risk.</p>

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<p>Ambition</p>	<p>The drafting and adopting of a comprehensive package of legislation relating to government fees creating guarantees that the state fee policy is coherent and consistent is an ambitious task requiring an in-depth analysis of the existing situation, outlining the shortcomings of the current policy and crafting sustainable solutions to the problems. As a result a uniform standardized approach to determining and imposing government fees will be put in place which will on the one hand ensure increased effectiveness of the public administrations in providing public services and better management of the service costs and on the other it opens opportunities for improved control by the citizens and businesses and the establishment of a predictable public environment.</p>				
<p>Completion Level</p>	<p>Not Started</p>	<p>Limited</p>	<p>Substantial</p>	<p>Completed</p>	
			<p>X</p>		
<p>Description of the results</p>	<p>During the reporting period the following activities were implemented resulting in the following outputs: Concept for a new policy on government fees; Comprehensive review of the existing legislation on government fees in Bulgaria; Methodology for analyzing the fees; Legal, financial and economic analysis of the fees, Analyses of good practices in 7 European countries; Impact assessment for the State Fees Concept; Draft Bill for a State Fees Act; Methodology for determining government fees on a cost-based principle; Special methodology for carrying out impact assessment for new or updated fees; Uniform tariff of government fees broken down by types of services. All the documents were published on the Public Consultations Portal strategy.bg and on the Consultative Councils Portal http://www.saveti.government.bg/. Following the public consultation the Draft Bill of the State Fees Act is coordinated internally between the ministries. In this interim self-assessment and before the Act takes force it is not possible to quantify or qualify the benefits and impact of the measure.</p>				
<p>End Date</p>	<p>2016</p>				

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Next Steps	After the inter-ministerial coordination the Draft Bill will be submitted for approval by the Council of Ministers and filed with Parliament for adoption.
Additional information	
One of the risks that might arise in relation to the implementation of this commitment is related to the debates in Parliament where delays and changes might occur due to the complex parliamentary landscape.	

Commitment Completion Template	
Commitment No 4.4 OPEN ADMINISTRATION	
Measure 1. Amendments to the Access to Public Information Act Measure 2. Drafting technical guidelines for releasing public information in open format Measure 3. Prioritization of the datasets to be open Measure 4. Starting a procedure for accession the Convention on Access to Official Documents of the Council of Europe	
Lead implementing agency	Administration of the Council of Ministers
Name of responsible person from implementing agency	Kalina Cherneva
Title, Department	Adviser in the political cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister for Public Administration and Coalition Policy
Email	k.cherneva@government.bg
Phone	02/940 2572

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Other actors involved	Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Administration of the Council of Ministers i. Ministry of Transport, Information Technologies and Communications i. all other administrations
	CSOs, private sector, working groups, multilaterals	<p>Representatives of CSOs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Access to Information Program i. Obshestvo.bg i. NGO Links i. Institute for Development of the Public Environment
Main Objective		<p>Applying open data in the work of the public sector organizations. More effective dialog with the NGOs, businesses and media with a view of improving the processes relating to the access to and provision of public sector information.</p>
Brief Description of Commitment		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Laying down legal provisions for open data and more specifically transposing Directive 2013/37/EC. 2. Drafting of technical guidelines for releasing public information in open format. 3. Prioritization of the datasets to be open (registers, reports, etc.) – report containing the prioritized list of datasets to be open; 4. Starting the procedure for Bulgaria’s accession to the Convention on Access to Official Documents of the Council of Europe.

Relevance	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Improving the process for provision of public information by creating an environment and technical capability to release data in open, machine-readable format;2. Standardizing publication by drafting technical guidelines for the release of public information, including an obligation for regular information updates;3. Amendments were submitted for approval in Parliament which improve the mechanisms for requesting public information. More specifically the APIA amendments provide for the establishment of an Access to Public Information Platform to be launched in June 2016. Every public institution shall publish the information requests, the responses and the information provided per each request on the Platform.4. Improving citizen participation by carrying out surveys among citizens and businesses to determine priority datasets to be open and by creating a mechanism for online submission of requests for information via the Open Data Portal;5. Open format allows for easier processing of information and development of innovative applications, visualizations and software products.
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<p style="text-align: center;">Ambition</p>	<p>Open data is a fairly new concept and practice in government and during the implementation of this commitment Bulgaria demonstrated its ambition to catch up with the countries that are leading the open data movement. For only 8 months the impressive number of nearly 90 (the number is constantly growing to reach 119 by the end of 2015) datasets were published in open format on the Open Data Portal www.opendata.government.bg. Significant progress was also made in terms of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishing technical capabilities and legal guarantees for reuse of public information. At present more effort is to be put in promoting reuse and ensuring the publication of well-structured good-quality data; 2. Addressing the need to improve the data exchange processes and increase the awareness of both the administrative units and citizens about open data and the opportunities to request public data in open, machine-readable format with the related metadata meeting official open data standards. 3. Priority publishing of datasets that are of greatest public importance and orienting the prioritization towards the needs of citizens and businesses in order to improve the effectiveness and openness of government and generating considerable social and economic benefits. 				
<p style="text-align: center;">Completion Level</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Not Started</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Limited</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Substantial</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Completed</p>	
			<p style="text-align: center;">X</p>		

<p>Description of the results</p>	<p>I. Laying down legal provisions for the open data initiative: The Amendments to the Access to Public Information Act (APIA) were approved by the Council of Ministers by force of a Decision No 279 of 29.04.2015 . The proposed amendments aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transpose Directive 2013/37/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the reuse of public sector information;• Establish improved procedures and mechanisms for providing public sector information and for reuse of public data;• Apply principles and rules for the publication of public sector information in open format. <p>The amendments provide for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. An obligation for the public sector organizations to publish the information they collect in open, machine-readable format allowing for reuse together with the respective metadata. Legal rights to freely use and reuse the information for commercial and noncommercial purposes.2. An obligation for the data to be published on the Open Data Portal.3. An obligation for the information to be prioritized to meet the needs of citizens and businesses; <p>II. Technical guidelines for provision of information in open machine-readable format. Guidelines were issued to all administrations relating to the requirements for the datasets to be uploaded on the Open Data Portal. More detailed guidelines will be drafted and included in the secondary legislation following the adoption of the amendments to APIA.</p> <p>III. Prioritization of public sector datasets to be published in open format:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ In accordance with Decision No 103 of the Council of Ministers of 17 February 2015 a Priority List of Datasets to be published in open format was approved.▪ The Council for Administrative Reform (comprised of all government ministers) adopted a Timeline for the gradual release of the datasets from the Priority List. According to the Timeline a total of 119 datasets will be open by the end of 2015. To date (30 September 2015) the number of datasets available to
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End Date	2016
Next Steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Adoption of the APIA amendments by Parliament;2. Drafting the secondary legislation (Ordinance on the terms and conditions for publishing public sector information in open format, Tariff for the APIA fees, Methodology for establishing transparent and measurable criteria for determining the fees);3. Publication of the remaining prioritized datasets in accordance with Decision No 1034. Prioritization of new datasets to be published in open format;5. Upgrade of the Open Data Portal.
Additional information	
<p>The challenges relate to the need to improve the capacity of both administration and civil sector to make use of open data as well as with improving the functionalities of the open data portal as currently automatic update of data is not possible. Special attention is to paid to encouraging citizens and businesses to get more actively involved in the prioritization process and in using the published data. Efforts will be made to identify the difficulties that the users encounter with the published data. Events will be organized to promote the products produced based on open data by the citizens and businesses.</p>	

5. PROGRESS ON ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

N/A

6. PEER EXCHANGE AND LEARNING

Bulgaria's OGP POC took part in the First Meeting of the European POCs held in Tbilisi, Georgia. During the event information and experience were exchanged with the other OGP participating countries with regards to the challenges in implementing the action plans and ideas were shared as to how to address the challenges. The session on interagency communication was especially useful in that respect.

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Assistance was also sought and received from the OGP Support Unit and more particularly the Communications Director in relation to Bulgaria's efforts to devise a consistent and comprehensive Strategy for increasing awareness of OGP among the administrative units and external audiences.

7. CONCLUSION, OTHER INITIATIVES AND NEXT STEPS

A. Lessons learned:

The experience gained during the development and implementation of Bulgaria's second National Action Plan serves as a basis to draw the following conclusions:

1. The good understanding and ongoing consistent communication of the OGP principles and philosophy both to the institutions of government and the external audiences (CSOs, businesses, media and other stakeholders) is key for achieving the objectives set in the Plan and for improving the interagency dialog and the interaction with civil society. Efforts should be made to generate international and domestic support for the OGP agenda of the government by enhancing the channels used for communicating Bulgaria's success internally and within the OGP network.
2. A better structured and more systemic consultation process is needed with regards to the development and implementation of the action plans. The lack of clear rules and procedures regulating the process result in low quality consultations and hence lower quality plans.
3. Formulating challenges and measures that are too general and non-specific makes it difficult to assess their impact following implementation. Attention should be paid in the future to ensuring greater specificity of the measures which in turn will stimulate and motivate more stakeholders to get involved in the process.
4. Bulgaria's OGP agenda and the perception of OGP need to be revamped towards a strategic, proactive and focused participation instead of formal implementation of measures within the framework of an initiative seen as somewhat exotic by a number of government officials and civil society representatives.
5. Consideration should be given in the future to formulating a unifying theme for Bulgaria's OGP efforts and to positioning the country as a regional leader for instance by implementing different activities reflecting the theme which should not necessarily all be included in the plan.

B. Other initiatives:

One of the important initiatives of the government not included in the Plan but contributing to achieving the OGP objectives is the inclusion of an eligibility requirement under the Good Governance Operational Program funded by the EU for government institutions and municipalities to guarantee open data and open source capabilities in all projects relating to the development and upgrade of their information systems.

C. Next steps:

The steps to be taken in the short-term in relation to Bulgaria's participation in the Open Government Partnership Initiative involve the establishment of a permanent dialog

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mechanism in the form of a Network for Partnership in Government. The Network will include representatives of the public institutions, civic organizations and business associations and will be designed to ensure the consistency and systematic nature of the public consultation process and complementarity of online and offline interactions between the institutions of government and the stakeholders. The Network will perform the following functions:

- Monitor the public consultation practices;
- Formulate and propose strategic guidelines and recommendations for improving the public consultation methods and tools based on feedback from the stakeholders;
- Carry out publicity and communications initiatives promoting the consultative process and encouraging more active participation in it;
- Establish ad-hoc task forces comprised of different stakeholders on issues/ policies of high importance for the public or issues requiring additional analytical expertise;
- Discuss proposed commitments and measures for the two year OGP National Action Plans;
- Submit proposals for commitments and measures to be included in the National Action Plans;
- Monitor and evaluate the implementation of commitments and measures included in the National Action Plans under the Open Government Partnership Initiative;
- Review the progress reports of the institutions relating to the implementation of the respective National Action Plan or strategic document;
- Issue strategic guidance and propose revisions to the plans with a view of improving the implementation of the OGP plans;
- Take and implement measures for the popularization of the Open Government Partnership Initiative and Bulgaria's participation in it among the public officials, citizens, businesses, etc;
- Provide technical support and take part in campaigns, events and trainings relating to OGP.

D. Conclusion:

The overall political and social environment in the period of developing Bulgaria's second National Action Plan did influence the nature of the public consultations and the quality of the commitments and measures included in the plan. The high level of mistrust between the institutions and citizens, the ongoing civic protests and the confrontation between different social groups as well as the uncertain future of the government and the parliamentary majority at the time (only two days after the Plan was approved by the Council of Ministers the government resigned) were serious obstacles to the consultation process resulting in limited contributions by the CSOs in the development of the plan. The tense situation and the reluctance of both sides to enter into a meaningful dialog were among the reasons for the lacking awareness campaign during the development of the Plan despite the fact that the issues relating to open government were in the focus of public attention.

On the other hand the heightened sensitivity of the public to issues such as the integrity of public officials and the openness of the decision-making process served as a catalyst for an

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active public debate and forced the political parties to include those issues in their campaign messages for the early parliamentary elections and to make specific commitments in that respect. These issues also became key priorities in the government program of the new government elected in October 2014. Thus following some delays in the implementation of the Plan due to the change of government in the beginning of 2015 the implementation of the Plan was resumed. New commitments were added to the Plan reflecting the new government priorities, addressing the expectations of the public and aimed at better targeted impact with a view of overcoming the lack of trust in the public institutions.

At this interim stage the effects can only be assessed partially as not all measures have been fully implemented and the time following the implementation for the completed ones is too short.

The conclusions drawn from the impact assessment broken down by commitments and measures are presented in the Table below.

Table 2

Commitment	Result	Impact
4.1. Close partnership between the administration and civil society	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amendments to NAL drafted following consultations with the stakeholders providing for: extended period for consultation from 14 to 30 days and obligatory impact assessment for new legislations• Amendments to the NLEA drafted and published and public consultation forums held to discuss the proposed amendments with the representatives of civil society	At this stage of implementation the effects of the measures under this commitment can mostly be found in fostering a culture of cooperation between the stakeholders as relating to the impact assessment of new legislation. One of the achievements is the active collaboration between the executive and the legislature which resulted in setting up a joint impact assessment unit. The amendments to NLEA were instrumental in rekindling the debate on the role of civil society and attracting attention to the strengths and weaknesses of the CSOs and to the problems they are facing in their work.

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<p>4.2. Improving public services and the legislative framework</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular publication of understandable information on government debt • New improved website of the Ministry of Finance with user-friendly interface and a new mobile version containing new sections and making it easier for the users to find the information they need and take active part in the consultations for proposed legislation; special open data section. • SME-test included as part of the overall impact assessment for new legislation • Amendments to the Mineral Resources Act adopted 	<p>The new design of the MF website and the willingness to provide understandable and accessible information increased the credibility of the institution. The ongoing analysis of the received user feedback enables the administration to appreciate the benefits of openness and is a motivating factor for the public officials to share more information. The surveys among users show that financial data is of special interest to society and the release of such data contributes to the more effective public spending. At this early stage it is however difficult to measure the overall impact from implementing this commitment as the changes relating to the introduction of an SME-test along with the entire NAL are yet to be adopted by Parliament and put into effect. The MRA was passed in the summer and require time to start being fully enforced.</p>
<p>4.3 More effective management of public funds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept for a new policy on government fees; Comprehensive review of the existing legislation on government fees in Bulgaria; Methodology for analyzing the fees; Legal, financial and economic analysis of the fees, Analyses of good practices in 7 European countries; Impact assessment for the State Fees Concept; Draft Bill for a State Fees Act; Methodology for determining government fees on a cost-based principle; Special methodology for carrying out impact assessment for new or updated fees; Uniform tariff of government fees broken down by types of services. 	<p>The new government fees policy and the underlying legislative amendments to that effect are currently coordinated within the executive and have not been enacted therefore their effects in terms of greater administrative effectiveness and reduced financial burden for the citizens and businesses cannot be measured.</p>

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4.4 Open administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amendments to APIA approved by the Council of Ministers which provide for procedures and mechanisms for reuse of public information and lay down the rules for publishing information in open format• A list of 119 datasets to be open approved and adopted along with a Timeline for release.• 31 administration published 79 datasets by 30 August 2015• An open data portal was developed and deployed - www.opendata.government.bg• Data visualizations developed by both government and NGOs and published on the Open Data Portal• A public event on open data was organized and attended by more than 100 participants	<p>The release of data in open format triggered off the interest of the users and a number of data visualizations were developed addressing issues that the public is sensitive to such as: internet penetration and readiness to use e-services; health care and cost of health services; civic registrations. The visualizations based on the data on civic registrations immediately before the upcoming local elections resulted in institutional measures against the irregular registrations and ensuring fair elections. Another effect of the data visualizations was to sensitize the local population to such bad practices and to motivate the CSOs and local communities to pressure the institutions to address the issue.</p>
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ABBREVIATIONS USED	
MF	Ministry of Finance
SME	Small and medium enterprises
NAL	Normative Acts Law
NLEA	Non-Profit Legal Entities Act
MRA	Mineral Resources Act
SFA	State Fees Act
APIA	Access to Public Information Act