



**PRIME MINISTER
OF GEORGIA**

To: Joyce Murray
President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Digital
Government
Government of Canada

Andres Horacio Ibarra
Deputy Chief of Staff and Secretary of Modernization
Government of Argentina

Nathaniel Heller
Executive Vice President for Integrated Strategies
Results for Development

Robin Hodess
Director, Governance & Transparency
The B Team

Subject: Application of Standing for Election to the Open Government Partnership Steering Committee

Dear OGP Co-chairs,

I am deeply honored to formalize Government of Georgia's intention to take part in the upcoming Open Government Partnership (OGP) Steering Committee (SC) elections. We are convinced that Georgia will be able to provide valuable contribution to the OGP through its participation in the SC.

As one of the first countries that joined OGP shortly after its inception, Georgia has gained a significant experience both in facilitating important openness and transparency policies and taking actions in response to challenges that are indivisible part of building a better democracy.

Based on the analysis of our achievements as well as challenges and reviews of OGP's performance globally, we have identified three main priorities for the next three years that are equally applicable to the national and international arena. The dimensions are as follows:

- **Securing high-level political support** to open government reforms on the ground and **enhancing cooperation within the region** to build alliance of leaders providing strong political support to the OGP;
- **Finding solutions for sustainable progress** - it is Government of Georgia's priority to ensure that the reforms we have started have solid roots to be continued. We will prioritize sharing our knowledge and learning from others about becoming sustainably transparent and open to our citizens;
- **Building a stronger partnership with civil society** – active involvement of civil society organizations significantly contributed to Georgia's success in OGP. We aim to analyze accomplishments and challenges of this cooperation thus far and take the co-creating process at a higher level. This shall allow us to suggest new approaches of genuine dialogue to our partner countries in different regions.

I am pleased to share Government of Georgia's OGP pass that led to prioritizing the above-mentioned directions.

A year of 2014 was the phase of major changes for Georgia with regard to the OGP process. A unique platform – **Open Government Georgia's Forum** (Forum) was established to coordinate OGP processes at the national level. Forum became a mechanism for state agencies, civil society and international organizations to debate over various status quos and offer solutions to the decision makers. The last three action plans of OGP Georgia are a joint product of an intense cooperation of Government and civil society in the framework of the Forum.

OGP has triggered number of important reforms in Georgia. In the framework of the OGP Action Plans we **created the first open data portal**. Following civil society recommendations, we have launched **the first e-petitions portal**. Government has taken further steps to **improve budget transparency and citizen engagement** in planning the budget. Our efforts have resulted in Georgia's nomination among top 5, **the most transparent countries** by the International Budget Partnership (IBP). In the framework of OGP we have ensured **proximity and availability of public services even for those leaving in remote villages**. We have launched a new **system of monitoring asset declarations** ensuring accountability of public officials.

With active involvement from civil society and international partners we have managed to **involve all three branches of government in the OGP process**.

Following the SC membership, Georgia took on the chairmanship role in 2017 and developed an ambitious strategy for the partnership focusing **on strengthening co-creation and citizens' engagement, transparency and anti-corruption, innovation in public service delivery, and on building a better partnership** – all directions being still high on our agenda. In our capacity as a chair of OGP, we hosted the 5th OGP Global Summit in Tbilisi, Georgia, July 17-19, 2018 – the biggest event of our recent history with 2270 participants from 115 countries.

Georgia as a chair of OGP has proposed to move from the notion of 'open government' to 'open governance'. This 'whole state approach' has been outlined as a resolution that was adopted by the OGP SC on 16 July, 2018. We are proud that **the resolution provides strategic framework for moving beyond promoting open government in the executive branch of government to the judiciary, legislatures and local governments**.

Notwithstanding Georgia's achievements we still have reforms that require government's full attention to be successfully implemented. At this stage of development civil society organizations in Georgia called upon more high-level political support to the OGP process. Acknowledging the need, coordination of open government process was transferred under direct supervision of the Prime Minister. We are currently in the process of planning the next steps with civil society, thus our priorities mentioned above are being tested in practice.

Considering the rich OGP experience, the Government of Georgia will be highly privileged to have a seat in the SC. OGP will maintain our high-level political attention in order to carry out ambitious reform commitments at the national level and mobilize diplomatic networks to advance OGP priorities globally.

Convinced by the democratic tradition of our country and its commitment to OGP we stand ready to dedicate time, resources and efforts to promoting OGP as a tool to address today's democratic challenges.

Respectfully,

Mamuka Bakhtadze

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