

Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Republic of Macedonia End-of-Term Report 2016-2018

IRM Staff in collaboration with CED Florozon

Overview: Republic of Macedonia.....	2
About the Assessment.....	5
Commitment Implementation.....	7
1. Participatory Policy Creating.....	10
2. Open Data.....	16
3. Freedom of Information	22
4. Prevention of Corruption and Promotion of Good Governance	26
5. Efficient Management of Public Resources.....	37
6. Theme Openness on Local Level.....	54
7. Public Services	71
8. Climate Changes	74
Methodological Note	79



Overview: Republic of Macedonia

Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) End-of-Term Report 2016-2018

Implementation of Macedonia's third action plan was collaborative, with 14 public institutions and several civil society organizations involved. Despite political instability and a change of government, more than half of its 33 commitments were substantially completed by end of term. Achievements include publication of financial data for several local governments and improved national budget transparency. Progress was limited on transparency in public procurement and asset declarations.

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 of the period July 2016 to July 2018 and includes some relevant developments up to August 2018.

The Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MIOA) is coordinating OGP activities in the country. MIOA was in charge of development and implementation of the third action plan for the 2016–2018 period. MIOA organized a consultative process through working groups of each of the topics. Civil society organizations (CSOs) also played a vital role, mostly during the design phase and, to a lesser extent, during implementation. In several commitments, they were the primary organizations in charge of coordinating the implementation of activities. Working alongside the CSOs were 14 public institutions, including seven ministries, three state commissions, two secretariats and two agencies.

The action plan 2016–2018 focused mostly on open data, access to information, openness on a local level, and climate change. It included 34 commitments grouped by eight thematic areas. By the end of the reporting period, two commitments led to major changes in government practice.

In November 2018, MIOA published an end-of-term self-assessment for the 2016-2018 action plan.¹ In July 2018, MIOA published the fourth action plan for the 2018-2020 period.²

¹ Available here: http://www.mioa.gov.mk/sites/default/files/pbl_files/documents/ogp/en-finalen_izvestaj_ap_ovp3_2016-2018.pdf.

² The 2018-2020 action plan is available in Macedonian and English, and contains 23 commitments. See Republic of Macedonia Action Plan 2018-2020 at <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/macedonia-action-plan-2018-2020>.

Table 1: At a Glance

Table 1: At a Glance		
	Mid-term	End of term
Number of Commitments	34	33
Level of Completion		
Completed	3	5
Substantial	8	13
Limited	13	13
Not Started	10	2
Number of Commitments with...		
Clear Relevance to OGP Values	30	30
Transformative Potential Impact	2	2
Substantial or Complete Implementation	11	18
All Three (🌟)	1	2
Did It Open Government?		
Major	2	
Outstanding	0	
Moving Forward		
Number of Commitments Carried Over to Next Action Plan	14	

Consultation with Civil Society during Implementation

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

The consultation process during the second year of implementation of the action plan was less effective compared to the first year. In the first year, the Macedonian government (MIOA) formed six working groups, each focusing on a different thematic area, to address and consult on commitment implementation. During the second year, however, none of the working groups gathered to consult on implementation of commitments. Additionally, there was no structured or systematic forum through which working group members could exchange information or consult on their shared commitments.

Instead, there are several examples where state institutions bilaterally communicated with CSOs regarding specific commitment activities. In regard to Commitment 3.1 (Freedom of Information), there was no channel of communication or consultation with all members of the relevant working group. However, the Commission for Protection of the Rights to Free Access to Public Information (CPRFAPI) conducted meetings with some CSOs (in particular with the Association for Equality, Solidarity and Equality of Women, ESE) to plan an awareness-raising media campaign. When implementing Commitment 5.4 (Involve CSOs when planning IPA2), the Secretariat for European Affairs invited some CSOs to participate in nine sectorial working groups, but other working group members assigned to this commitment were not involved. Similar examples include the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning and Republic of North Macedonia (UNDP), regarding the eighth chapter of the 2016–2018 action plan about climate change. Overall, government institutions consulted CSOs on a number of commitments during implementation, but the multistakeholder forum itself was inactive.

Table 2: Consultation during Implementation

Regular Multistakeholder Forum	Midterm	End of Term
1. Did a forum exist?	Yes	Yes
2. Did it meet regularly?	Yes	No

Table 3: Level of Public Influence during Implementation

The IRM has adapted the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) “Spectrum of Participation” to apply to OGP.¹ This spectrum shows the potential level of public influence on the contents of the action plan. In the spirit of OGP, most countries should aspire for “collaborative.”

Level of Public Influence during Implementation of Action Plan		Midterm	End of Term
Empower	The government handed decision-making power to members of the public.		
Collaborate	There was iterative dialogue AND the public helped set the agenda.	✓	
Involve	The government gave feedback on how public inputs were considered.		

Consult	The public could give inputs.		✓
Inform	The government provided the public with information on the action plan.		
No Consultation	No consultation		

¹ For more information, see: "IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation", IAP2, 2018, https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/pillars/Spectrum_8.5x11_Print.pdf.

About the Assessment

The indicators and method used in the IRM research can be found in the IRM Procedures Manual.¹ One measure, the “starred commitment” (★), deserves further explanation due to its particular interest to readers and usefulness for encouraging a race to the top among OGP-participating countries. Starred commitments are considered exemplary OGP commitments. To receive a star, a commitment must meet several criteria:

- Starred commitments will have “medium” or “high” specificity. A commitment must lay out clearly defined activities and steps to make a judgment about its potential impact.
- 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.²
- The government must make significant progress on this commitment during the action plan implementation period, receiving an assessment of “substantial” or “complete” implementation.

Starred commitments can lose their starred status if their completion falls short of substantial or full completion at the end of the action plan implementation period.

In the mid-term report, the Republic of Macedonia action plan contained one starred commitment. At the end of term, based on the changes in the level of completion, the Republic of Macedonia’s action plan contained two starred commitments.

Finally, the tables in this section present an excerpt of the wealth of data the IRM collects during its reporting process. For the full dataset for the Republic of Macedonia, see the OGP Explorer at www.opengovpartnership.org/explorer.

About “Did It Open Government?”

To capture 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 the government practice has changed as a result of the commitment’s implementation.

As written, some OGP commitments are vague and/or not clearly relevant to OGP values but achieve significant policy reforms. In other cases, commitments as written appear relevant and ambitious, but fail to open government as implemented. The “Did It Open Government” variable attempts to capture these subtleties.

The “Did It Open Government?” variable assesses changes in government practice using the following spectrum:

- Worsened: Government openness worsens as a result of the commitment.
- Did not change: No changes in government practice.
- Marginal: Some change, but minor in terms of its effect on 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

in 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.

¹ IRM Procedures Manual, IRM, <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/about/about-irm>.

² The International Experts Panel changed this criterion in 2015. For more information, visit <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/node/5919>.

Commitment Implementation

General Overview of Commitments

As part of OGP, countries are required to make commitments in a two-year action plan. The tables below summarize the completion level at the end of term and progress on the “Did It Open Government?” metric. For commitments that were complete at the midterm, the report will provide a summary of the progress report findings but focus on analysis of the ‘Did It Open Government?’ variable. For further details on these commitments, please see the Republic of Macedonia IRM Progress Report 2017.

The 2016–2018 action plan focused on eight key areas: participatory policy creation, open data, freedom of information, prevention of corruption and promotion of good governance, efficient management of public resources, openness on local level, public services, and climate change.

Table 4: Assessment of Progress by Commitment

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	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
1.1 Improve Consultation Process with Civil Society			✓		✓	✓				✓				✓							
1.2 Improve Government Consultation with CSOs		✓				✓				✓				✓					✓		
2.1 Create Open Data Standards			✓		✓						✓				✓			✓			
2.2. Improve Open Data Platform			✓		✓						✓			✓				✓			
2.3 Raise Awareness About Open Data				✓	✓					✓			✓					✓			
2.4 Catalog Government Datasets				✓	✓					✓			✓					✓			
2.5 Link Open Data to Government Portals			✓		✓					✓			✓					✓			
3.1 Implement FOI Law				✓	✓		✓				✓			✓		✓			✓		

4.1 Implement Law on Whistleblower Protection			✓		✓		✓					✓		✓								
4.2 Open Data on Asset Declarations				✓	✓				✓			✓			✓							
4.3 Monitor Integrity of LSUs			✓		Unclear					✓				✓								
4.4 Promote Cooperation to Prevent Corruption			✓			✓					✓					✓						
5.1 Open Budget Initiative				✓	✓	✓						✓				✓						✓
5.2 Open Data on Health Programs				✓	✓							✓				✓						✓
5.3. Mandatory Publication of Public Procurement Information				✓	✓							✓			✓						✓	
5.4. Involve CSOs when planning IPA 2		✓				✓					✓				✓						✓	
5.5. Publish Data on ORIO				✓	✓							✓			✓						✓	
5.6 Introduce Concession Contacts Register			✓		✓							✓						✓			✓	
5.7 Strengthen Capacities of the Ministry of Health				✓	Unclear						✓			✓						✓		
5.8 Publish Data on Financial Assistance for Rural Development				✓	✓							✓			✓						✓	
5.9 Increase Transparency in Public Finances Management			✓		✓							✓			✓						✓	
6.1 Develop Transparency and Open Data Standards			✓		✓							✓					✓				✓	
6.2 Improve Financial Transparency of LSUs		✓			✓						✓					✓						✓
6.3 Improve Institutional Consultation Mechanism			✓			✓						✓				✓					✓	

Theme I. Participatory Policy Creating

1.1 Improve consultation process with civil society

Title: Advancement of the consultation process with stakeholders in the policy creating process

Affirmation and improvement of the established practices and procedures in policy creating, supported by the government and public sector, are the basis for improvement of the Government transparency and accountability to the public. Also, the information technology supporting established procedures in policy creating enable greater openness, timeliness and responsibility of the public sector. This commitment is expected to increase the government accountability and openness in a two-year period through the process improvement and conducting consultations with the public:

- *In the preparation process of ex ante and ex post regulation impact assessment through preparation and publication of Annual Report of conducted consultations*
- *Sharing results provided by independent non-government organization's monitoring of the Government institutions' openness in policy making processes and law drafting*
- *External monitoring of the Unique National Electronic Registry of Regulations (ENER)*
- *Extending the consultation deadline with stakeholders in law drafting*
- *Publication of press releases and information from held sessions of the Government on determined law proposals, made decisions and other measures*
- *Definition and publication of basic data on civil organizations and business subjects on the website of the Central Register of the RM*

(Ministry of Information Society and Administration; Supporting Institution(s): General Secretariat of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, ministries, Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC), Center for Research and Policy Making (CRPM), UNDP. July 2016–June 2018)

1.2 Improve government cooperation with CSOs

Title: Cooperation advancement with civil sector

There is a need for more active involvement of the civil society organizations in policy defining of the civil sector concern and increased cooperation in the joint initiatives implementation and monitoring. Main objective: Improvement of the cooperation between the Government and the civil sector through setting up an advisory body for cooperation, dialogue and encouragement of the civil sector development, participatory policy creating for the Government's Annual Work Program through increased number of initiatives by the civil organizations, in accordance with the Good Practices Code for the civil sector involvement in the policy creating process and continuation of the cooperation through participatory preparation of the new 2018-2022 Strategy of the Government for cooperation with the civil sector.

- *Ensuring better environment for the civil sector development;*
- *Encouraging civil sector activism in the social processes;*
- *Strengthening of the existing and creating new cooperation mechanisms;*
- *Allowing civil organizations to make contribution to the processes for economic progress, law and policy creating, European integration and democracy development, as well as meeting the needs of the community.*

(General Secretariat of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia. July 2016–January 2018)

Editorial Note: This commitment text has been abridged. For full text, please see <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/macedonia-national-action-plan-2016-2018>

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm		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	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
I.1 Improve Consultation Process with Civil Society			✓		✓	✓				✓				✓					✓		
I.2 Improve Government Cooperation with CSOs		✓				✓				✓				✓			✓		✓		

Commitment Aim

Although the government had established the Unique National Electronic Regulation Registry (ENER), an online consultation mechanism with the dual function to publish updated government legislation and provide a platform for citizen feedback, it had not been sufficiently utilized as a tool for following and influencing legislation.

Commitment I.1 aimed to change this situation through measures that would influence the methodology for monitoring legislation, improve the ENER system, as well as prolong the legal deadlines concerning legislative consultations with citizens. Other commitment activities included publishing an annual report on consultations to the Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA) website and a list of basic data on business entities and NGOs on the Central Register website.

Commitment I.2 also aimed to improve the participation of CSOs in the policy process by setting up an advisory body composed of government representatives and CSOs, implementing a Good Practices Code for CSO participation, and preparing the government's 2018–2022 Cooperation Strategy between the Government and the Civil Sector.¹²

Status

I.1 Improve consultation process with civil society

Midterm: Limited

Commitment I.1 had limited completion by the midterm. Due to the elections in December 2016 and the subsequent political turmoil in the arrival of a new administration in May 2017, Parliament did not pass any law during this period. This was the main challenge hindering implementation, since several commitment activities depended on relevant legislation being adopted (e.g. the external monitoring of ENER).

However, the government made some progress on other commitment activities. First, MISA drafted a methodology to monitor, collect, and process data from completed consultations with stakeholders. Second, the government extended the minimum number of days for consultation from 10 to 20 days, as expected, by amending the Rules of Procedure. Third, the General Secretariat

started to regularly publish and update relevant documents on its website, in particular, press releases on sessions held by the government.³ Finally, the Central Register of the Republic of Macedonia (CRRM) created a list of data on civil society organizations and businesses to be published on the CRRM website. By midterm, the draft list had been produced. The data will be divided by organizational form, sector of activities (industry) and statistical regions.

End of term: Substantial

MISA has completed the methodology⁴ within the project “Mirror of the Government” (Ogledalo na Vladata). The methodology is regularly used by the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC) and thoroughly measures breaches in the legislative procedure. However, it only applies to law drafting phases prior to the draft’s consideration by the Parliament, with no possibility of following up the procedure afterwards.⁵

The government has not prepared or published the annual report on conducted consultations during the law-drafting process, mostly due to the fact that Parliament has not passed any legislation in this timeframe. One CSO representative stated that the 2017 annual report would be finished in the upcoming period,⁶ while the 2018 report will be prepared in mid-2019.⁷

Since the midterm, the government has not made any progress on extending the deadline for consultation on ENER. Specifically, the government has not changed the deadline from five to 15 days, which was initially published on the announcement of the start of the preparation process for the proposed legislation. Similarly, publication of the list of basic data on civil organizations and businesses is also stunted; MCIC has not provided their feedback to MISA.

1.2 Improve government cooperation with CSOs

Midterm: Limited

Commitment 1.2 had limited completion by the midterm report. The initial decision to establish the Advisory Board was adopted on 17 May 2016,⁸ but was suspended due to public concerns over transparency and bias, according to the government representative consulted by the IRM researchers.⁹ The following year, consultative meetings regarding the formation of the Advisory Board (full name: Council for Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Macedonia and the Civil Sector) were held on 13 July 2017 in the Public Administration Club.¹⁰

To implement the Good Practices Code, the government continued its practice of announcing calls for CSOs to contribute to the preparation of the Government Work Program. The government had not begun preparing its 2018–2022 Cooperation Strategy in the midterm reporting period.

End of term: Complete

The first milestone was completed in April 2018; the decision to establish the Advisory Board (Council for Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Macedonia and the Civil Sector) was amended by a Government Decision on 15 November 2017.¹¹ It held its first constitutive session on 16 April 2018 and has held three sessions since. The meeting minutes have been made available via www.nvosorabotka.gov.mk,¹² as well as Board activities and calls for civil initiatives.

The government has continued to apply the Good Practices Code regarding the civil sector’s participation in the policy-creation process. Sixteen CSO initiatives were received by the end of 2017 and one more in 2018 by the time of writing this report. On 17 August 2018, the government adopted a standardized “Form for Civil Initiatives” to simplify the application process for interested CSOs. The form is available on the Single National Electronic Register (ENER), which acts as a platform to publish calls and for CSOs to participate in annual preparation of the Government Work Program. The last call was published on 22 August 2018.¹³

The third milestone can also be considered complete.¹⁴ Beginning in mid-November 2017, the Unit for Cooperation with Civil Society—within the General Secretariat—published a call for civil initiatives that was open for 45 days to prepare the 2018–2022 Cooperation Strategy between the

government and the civil sector. It also published a report on the implementation of the previous strategy for the period 2012–2017 in December 2017.¹⁵

According to a government official, in February 2018, the Unit for Cooperation with Civil Society held a meeting about the 2018–2022 Cooperation Strategy with a network of civil servants, who were then appointed to communicate with civil organizations. The Unit for Cooperation also held a workshop on 13 February 2018 at the EU InfoCenter,¹⁶ where civil organizations gave contributions to the next strategy. In late February 2018, the Unit for Cooperation made another call to create a working group, through which civil organizations could assist in the preparation of the new strategy.¹⁷ The working group met twice in mid-March,¹⁸ and approximately 60 CSO representatives took part to help produce a concept for the new strategy. Two public debates were held in Skopje and Bitola in mid-April, and another working group meeting was held in May. The Advisory Board also gave opinions on the drafted document in two sessions.¹⁹

Did It Open Government?

1.1 Improve consultation process with civil society

Access to Information: Marginal

Civic Participation: Did not change

The introduction of the government practice to publish press releases regarding proposed laws, adopted decisions, and other measures represents a marginal improvement for access to information. Although short versions of the press releases are regularly published on the website of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia,²⁰ the full versions are published in the *Official Gazette*, which requires payment to access. CSOs criticized²¹ this practice, since they cannot freely obtain the full versions of the press releases with detailed insight into the government meetings that have been held. Additionally, CSOs point out that the webpage of the Parliament is not regularly updated and that draft laws proposed by Members of Parliament are not available.²²

This commitment also contained a number of activities that could potentially improve opportunities for the public to influence policy making. By extending the deadline for consultation on ENER from 10 to 20 days, citizens now have more time to comment on draft laws and spur public debate, as well as comment on legislative proposals via ENER. Furthermore, the practice of external monitoring of ENER, that is, enabling the qualified public (CSOs mostly) to follow legislative procedure and monitor possible breaches by institutions, is a new government practice that has opened up the possibility for CSOs to comment and improve legislation by sharing their ideas and proposals with the legislators. However, the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC) is the only organization following ENER systematically through the project “Ogledalo na vladata” and regularly reporting on the breaches and violations of the drafting process and the consultations regarding these draft laws.²³ These reports are sent to decision-makers via a mailing list that is, as one CSO representative states, “outdated and not refreshed adequately,”²⁴ and which needs to be updated after the change of government in 2017. Therefore, the IRM team cannot consider that there have been changes in civic participation.

1.2 Improve government cooperation with CSOs

Civic Participation: Marginal

The creation of the Advisory Board (Council for Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Macedonia and the Civil Sector) has improved the government practice on citizen engagement since 2016. It provides opinions to the government and adopts positions regarding civil society initiatives. The format of the Advisory Board ensures CSOs cannot be circumvented. Out of 31 Board members, 16 are CSO representatives, including the chair appointed by the government via public competition, and 15 members are appointed from state administrative bodies. This ensures that civil society is given a formal advantage in influencing policy-making processes that require the Board’s opinion. However, although the board is operational, it still lacks publicity.²⁵

The number of civil society initiatives received has more than doubled since August 2017 until the end of 2018 (from eight to 17),²⁶ ranging from specific legal amendments to policy recommendations. Several ministries held consultations with CSOs throughout 2016 and 2017 concerning the following laws:²⁷ Law on Whistleblowers and Law on Judicial Council (Ministry of Justice), Law on Consumer Protection (Ministry of Economy), Law on Health Care and Law on Drugs and Medical Means (Ministry of Health Care), Laws on Elementary, Secondary, and Higher Education (Ministry of Education and Science), amendments to the Law on Pension and Disability Insurance, Law on Mandatory Capital Financed Pension Insurance, and the Law on Child Protection. CSOs were included in the preparation of the Law on Discrimination Prevention (Ministry of Labor and Social Policy). Also, CSOs were consulted and included in the drafting process of strategic documents, such as the Strategy for Development of Small and Medium Enterprises and the Strategy for Women's Entrepreneurship.²⁸

The Cooperation Strategy between Government and Civil Society 2018–2022 was drafted through a consultative process. The Good Practices Code was followed throughout the consultation, facilitating input from over 60 CSOs, which represents a positive change in government practice.²⁹ It is important to note that CSOs that took part in the process were mainly those already interested, and that some CSOs also considered that not all relevant policy influencers were equally informed about the process.³⁰

Carried Forward?

One activity from Commitment I.I has been carried forward in the new Action Plan 2018–2020, under the title of “Basic data for registered entities in the Central Register of the Republic of Macedonia should become publicly available and free of charge on the website of CRRM.”³¹ It has two major milestones: ensuring the CRRM for publicly basic data for registered entities free of charge, and developing a software solution that is integrated and accessible through the CRRM website for enabling a search for 100% of the registered entities.

The IRM team encourages the government to further increase efforts to advertise the Advisory Board's activities and the government portal www.nvosorabotka.gov.mk, as it is not widely known. In relation to Commitment I.I, the IRM recommends to remove the charges for access to full press release documentation on draft laws.

¹ “IRM Macedonia Progress Report 2016-2017”, OGP, IRM, p.33, 1 July 2018, available at: <https://bit.ly/2nzMA36>.

² Idem, p. 34; “Open Government National Action Plan 2016-2018”, The Republic of Macedonia Ministry of Information Society and Administration, Skopje, p.14, July 2016, <https://bit.ly/2lt9sZl>.

³ See website of the General Secretariat of the Government, <http://vlada.mk/vladini-sednici>.

⁴ “Methodology”, Government Mirror, accessed 4 October 2018, available at <https://www.ogledalonavladata.mk/za-proektot/metodologija.html>.

⁵ Snezana Kamilovska, MCIC, interview by IRM researcher, 4 October 2018.

⁶ Based on only the period where legislation has passed through Parliament.

⁷ Snezana Kamilovska, *ibid*.

⁸ “Decision to Establish a Council for Cooperation Between the Government of the Republic of Macedonia and the Civil Sector”, Department for Cooperation with NGOs, 17 May 2016, accessed 18 December 2018, available at: <https://bit.ly/2oejOkn>.

⁹ Suzana Nikodijevik Filipovska, head of sector at the General Secretariat of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, interview by IRM researcher, 22 August 2018.

¹⁰ “IRM Macedonia Progress Report 2016-2017”, *ibid*.

¹¹ “Decision to Amend and Supplement the Decision to Establish a Council for Cooperation Between the Government of the Republic of Macedonia and the Civil Sector”, Department for Cooperation with NGOs, 15 November 2017, accessed 18 December 2018, available at: <https://bit.ly/2nwY9rV>. A consolidated version of the Decision is available at: <https://bit.ly/2lXtj1H>.

¹² “Council for the Collaboration with and Development of the Civil Sector”, <http://www.nvosorabotka.gov.mk/?q=node/99>.

¹³ “Documents”, ENER, <https://www.ener.gov.mk/default.aspx?item=news&subitem=list>.

¹⁴ Suzana Nikodijevik Filipovska *ibid*; Martin Nikolic, UNDP Skopje, interview by IRM researcher, 22 and 23 August 2018.

-
- ¹⁵ Republic of Macedonia, Department for Cooperation with NGOs, http://www.nvosorabotka.gov.mk/sites/default/files/dokumenti/Analiza_2017Novo.pdf.
- ¹⁶ Suzana Nikodijevik Filipovska, *ibid*; <http://www.euic.mk/#> - the link to the agenda is broken on the website of the EU info Center in Skopje, thus the information could not be confirmed.
- ¹⁷ "Call for participation in a working group to develop a strategy for government cooperation with the civil sector", Department for Cooperation with NGOs, <http://www.nvosorabotka.gov.mk/?q=node/85>.
- ¹⁸ "Meetings of the working group for preparation of the Government Strategy for Cooperation with and Development of the Civil Sector 2018-2020", Department for Cooperation with NGOs, <http://www.nvosorabotka.gov.mk/?q=node/93>.
- ¹⁹ Suzana Nikodijevik Filipovska, *ibid*.
- ²⁰ Integral list available at "Government meetings", Department for Cooperation with NGOs, accessed 4 October 2018, <http://vlada.mk/vladini-sednici>.
- ²¹ Snezana Kamilovska, *ibid*.
- ²² *Ibid*.
- ²³ "Concessions 2017", Mirror of the Government (Ogledalo na Vladata), accessed 4 October 2018, <https://www.ogledalonavladata.mk/otstapki/otstapki-2017.html>; 2018 version available at "Concessions 2018", Mirror of the Government (Ogledalo na Vladata), accessed 4 October 2018, <https://www.ogledalonavladata.mk/otstapki/otstapki-2018.html>.
- ²⁴ Snezana Kamilovska, *ibid*.
- ²⁵ Martin Nikolic, *ibid*.
- ²⁶ Suzana Nikodijevik Filipovska, *ibid*. Also verifiable at www.nvosorabotka.gov.mk.
- ²⁷ According to information available (from interviews by the researchers), most if not all consultative meetings occurred during the drafting process. Civic initiatives differed in content and goals. Some initiatives were proposals for specific legal amendments, which were then expressed and discussed at relevant consultations organized by competent authorities.
- ²⁸ Republic of Macedonia, *ibid*; Suzana Nikodijevik, *ibid*.
- ²⁹ *Ibid*.
- ³⁰ IRM deduction, founded on the interview with Martin Nikolik, *ibid*.
- ³¹ "Open Government National Action Plan 2018-2020", Open Government Partnership, p. 6, July 2018, available at <https://bit.ly/2InElf0>.

2. Open Data

2.1. Create open data standards

Title: Creation of open data standards

Presently, there are no developed open data standards in Macedonia and each institution publishes data in accordance with its technical capacities. Accordingly, it happens that related data sets of different structure and description are published by different institutions. According to the Law on public sector data use, institutions in the Republic of Macedonia are obliged to publish open data in a computer-readable format in compliance with their technical capacities. Presently, the otvorenipodatoci.gov.mk portal provides 154 data sets, and this number is expected to increase eventually. Therefore, development of open data standards has become a necessity in order to facilitate access to information, as well as for published data sets identification and use. Standards development would make data set more accessible for the citizens, easier for development of certain open data-based applications and increase public responsibility of institutions. This commitment includes development of open data standards for facilitated open data identification and use. This will allow citizens easier identification of data of their concern and to monitor their timely updating.

(Ministry of Information Society and Administration; Supporting Institution(s): Center For Change Management (CCM), Metamorphosis Internet and Society Foundation, Reactor. July 2016–June 2018)

2.2. Improve Open Data Platform

Title: Improvement of the Open Data Platform and its approximation to the citizens

Presently, open data license model has not been established in Macedonia, and the www.otvorenipodatoci.gov.mk website takes over unlicensed sets. The www.otvorenipodatoci.gov.mk website provides a possibility for keeping history of unpublished data sets, and it is an option for the institution that publishes a certain data set. According to the Law on public sector data use, institutions in the Republic of Macedonia are obliged to publish open data in a computer-readable format in compliance with their technical capacities. Presently, the www.otvorenipodatoci.gov.mk portal provides 154 data sets, and this number is expected to increase eventually. Increased number of open data sets increases the need for establishing appropriate license model to allow undisturbed access to open data, at the same time protecting institutions that create data first of all through open data abuse prevention. This commitment includes establishment of open data licenses and open data archives on the www.otvorenipodatoci.gov.mk for facilitated open data identification and use and easier monitoring of trends in certain fields. On the other hand, it will contribute for data sets abuse and protection of institutions that produce these data sets.

(Ministry of Information Society and Administration; Supporting Institution(s): Free Software. July 2016–June 2018)

2.3. Raise awareness about open data

Title: Raising awareness of open data

In 2014, the Ministry of Information Society and Administration set up a modern open data platform for publishing open data sets of institutions. Since then, the Ministry has organized a number of events for the portal promotion, as well as the first hackathon competition for development of open data based applications. Despite these activities, the portal has been visited at average of 700 single visits a month that is far from the expected number. This is considered to be due to insufficient popularization of open data as a concept, and the low citizens' awareness of the open data importance and potential. Conducted analysis and contacts with the non-government sector and citizens led to the conclusion that the open data concept and the concept for free access to information are still confused. In order to increase the civil sector's involvement and open data use, that would facilitate access to information, public responsibility and increased openness and accountability, it is necessary to provide additional education for the key factors in institutions, as well as enhanced presentation and popularization of the open data concept among the citizens. This commitment includes initiation of a campaign for popularization of the open data concept.

(Ministry of Information Society and Administration; Supporting Institution(s): Free Software, Reactor. July 2016–June 2018)

2.4. Catalog government datasets

Title: Cataloguing and categorization of data sets held by state institutions

According to the Article 7 of the Law on public sector data use, public bodies and institutions are obliged to submit electronic data catalogue to the Ministry of Information Society and Administration, created within their competence and published for public use, including date of data publishing (by data sets) for their use, dynamics and their updating (daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly) and a single link, that is a web location where data are published by the public bodies and institutions. The so far experience in this provision implementation shows that the public bodies and institutions need additional support in these catalogues preparation. According to the Law on public sector data use, institutions in the RM are obliged to keep a data set catalogue and inform the Ministry of Information Society and Administration about that on a regular basis. This is the central commitment for establishing a sustainable growth and development of the open data platform. As a result of the internal analysis, each institution should create a Data Set Catalogue, as a guideline what data sets are to be collected and published in the future.

(Ministry of Information Society and Administration; Supporting Institution(s): Center for Change Management (CCM), other NGOs.
July 2016–June 2018)

2.5. Link open data to government portals

Title: Open data Linking on the state institutions' portals

Responsible Institution(s): Each institution publishing open data on the portal, should have a special open data section on its website, where all published data set are listed, with appropriate link to the central open data portal. By simulation of an ordinary citizen searching for certain data on the state institutions' portals (supposing that they could be found there), we will face a situation where a citizen fails to find required data, although they have been published on the open data portal. Therefore, it is necessary that each institution publishing open data on the portal has a special open data section on its website, where all published data set are listed, with appropriate link to the central open data portal. Implementation of this measure will ensure a comprehensive approach to data set publication and consummation. This would eliminate cases of double published data sets. The ambition is publication of all data sets centrally on the open data portal and posting direct links to those data sets on the data holder institutions' web portals.

(Ministry of Information Society and Administration; Supporting Institution(s): Public bodies and institutions that have published open data on the portal. July 2016–June 2018)

Editorial Note: This commitment text has been abridged. For full text, please see <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/macedonia-national-action-plan-2016-2018>

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	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
2.1 Create Open Data Standards			✓		✓						✓				✓			✓			
			✓		✓						✓			✓				✓			

The Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA) decided to create a new portal, www.data.gov.mk. At the time of writing this report, it is in the preproduction phase and is still being tested.⁵ The remaining commitment activities have not been implemented, due to the fact that the new data portal is not yet functional. For instance, the license model cannot be implemented until the data portal is functioning. With regard to the adaptation of the portal, based on the needs of the dataset-archive model, MISA has informed the IRM team that several options are available.⁶ These include manual data upload, web services (although not all institutions have the IT capacity needed), and an Application Programming Interface (API). Each institution will choose how to adapt the portal and upload data based on its own capacities.

2.3. Raise awareness about open data

Midterm: Not Started

At the midterm, this commitment was behind schedule. Although the survey to measure citizens' familiarity with open data was supposed to have been completed by October 2016, MISA was still in the process of determining the survey's questions and methodology to establish a baseline of open-data awareness. MISA had not selected the institutional representatives for the training and had not carried out the advertising campaigns and the hackathon.

End of term: Limited

Since the midterm, limited progress has been made. The responsible institutions (MISA and the two organizations Free Software and Reactor) have not conducted a public-opinion survey, nor have they taken any steps to implement the advertising campaigns or the hackathon. The only commitment activity that has been completed is the organization of trainings on open-data identification and publication. However, the scope of the training has been modified from 20 to four institutions: the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, and the Ministry of Education and Science have organized open-data trainings, as MISA informed the IRM researchers,^{7,8} and was confirmed by CSOs (CCM specifically) involved in this commitment.⁹

2.4. Cataloguing and categorization of data sets held by state institutions

Midterm: Not Started

By the midterm, this commitment had not been started.

End of term: Limited

By the end of term, the government made limited progress. In regard to the first activity, MISA has informed the IRM team that they reduced their initial objective and instead identified four institutions to catalogue and categorize their data, the same as in Commitment 2.3: the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, and the Ministry of Education and Science.¹⁰ The second activity, the analysis of institutions' data sets, was completed, but ultimately was limited due to there being only four datasets total.¹¹

The third activity, the creation of a central catalogue of all institutions' data sets, is dependent on the new open-data portal that is not yet operational. The fourth activity, prioritization of datasets to be published and the preparation of a publication plan, is considered to be completed, as it is closely linked to the new Strategy for Open Data (2018-2020),¹² where the model for prioritizing the publication of data¹³ and an action plan¹⁴ are explained in detail.

2.5. Open data linking on the state institutions' portals

Midterm: Not Started

At the midterm, institutions had not been able to post a link to the open-data portal on their respective websites, since the new portal was not available yet.

End of term: Not started

The completion of the new open data portal www.data.gov.mk was set for the end of 2018, which falls outside the action plan's implementation period.

Did It Open Government?

2.1. Create open data standards

Access to Information: Did not change

This commitment has not produced any results yet, as the government still needs to formally adopt the meta data standards. Once the standards are adopted, institutions will need to implement them to start improving the quality of data they publish.

2.2. Improve Open Data Platform

Access to Information: Did not change

This commitment aimed to select and implement a license model for the government's open data portal, as well as analyzing the possibilities for saving datasets in the portal's archive and adapting the data portal based on the needs of the archive. However, by the end of term, the most significant activity—the implementation of the license model on the new data portal—had not been completed. Although MISA officials noted that different institutions have chosen different modalities for uploading data to the new portal,¹⁵ government efforts have been largely internal and do not translate to improved access to information for the general public. While this commitment has begun to create the needed environment for greater access to information, there have not been actual changes in government practice.

2.3. Raise awareness about open data

Access to Information: Did not change

Although the aim of this commitment was to popularize the open-data concept, the government has only completed one of the four intended activities. Even then, MISA reduced the number of datasets identified from 20 institutions to four. This activity served as a pilot project, but it did not lead to changing any disclosure practices.

2.4. Cataloguing and categorization of data sets held by state institutions

Access to Information: Did not change

Of the four activities outlined in this commitment, MISA has identified and analyzed the datasets of four institutions.¹⁶ In light of this context, the commitment did not change government practice on access to information. As MISA officials have confirmed, the completed activities represent preparatory steps for the categorization and prioritization of datasets,¹⁷ and there has been no change in practice in terms of disclosing any new information yet. No publicly-available catalogue exists at the moment.

2.5. Open data linking on the state institutions' portals

Access to Information: Did Not Change

Since no activities were started under the commitment, it did not lead to any changes.

Carried Forward?

Of the five total commitments under the open-data theme, three have been partially carried over to the next action plan. Commitment 2.1 was nearly complete by the end of term. The action plan 2018–2020 includes a nearly-identical commitment, with an added regional dimension: creation of a working group to analyze Macedonian standards for metadata and draft open-data standards on the regional level.

Commitment 2.2 was not carried over to action plan 2018–2020, since all activities in the commitment were expected to be completed by the end of 2018.

Commitment 2.3 was partially carried forward to the next action plan. Two activities of the new commitment on open data at the central level (Commitment 4.1) are a continuation of this commitment.¹⁸ The Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA) informed the IRM team that the open-data campaign would not be carried out as such to the next action plan.

However, a change of approach to increase the use of social media in the following period is foreseen.¹⁹

Parts of Commitment 2.4 were carried over to the next action plan. The new Commitment 4.1 envisages four milestones that directly stem from that unfinished commitment.²⁰

Commitment 2.5 was not carried forward to the action plan 2018–2020. However, the IRM team advises MISA to revisit the linking of the state institutions' websites to the central portal and their respective datasets once the new open data portal is set up. This will make access easier and increase the chances for accessing open data by various stakeholders and the general public.

¹ "Open data in Macedonia: From Legislation to Engagement," Open Data Institute, <https://bit.ly/30UEMqY>.

² "Macedonia," Open Data Barometer, <https://bit.ly/35aXMEX>.

³ Nadica Josifovski, Ministry of Information Society and Administration, interview by IRM researcher, 11 September 2018. IRM team has requested to see the working document on the metadata standards as a proof of completion of the commitment. Document has not been sent to this point.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Nadica Josifovski, *ibid.*

⁸ IRM team Macedonia is in possession of Excel files with the identified data sets by institution. Official email communication with Nadica Josifovski, Ministry of Information Society and Administration, 12 September 2018.

⁹ Martin Todevski, Center for Change Management, interview by IRM researcher, 31 August 2018.

¹⁰ IRM team Macedonia is in possession of Excel files with the identified data sets by institution. Official email communication with Nadica Josifovski, Ministry of Information Society and Administration, 12 September 2018.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² "Strategy for open data (2018-2020)", Government of the Republic of Macedonia, MISA, accessed 12 September 2018, available [in Macedonian] at <https://bit.ly/359Qa5v>.

¹³ *Idem*, p. 64.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 74-89.

¹⁵ Nadica Josifovski, *ibid.*

¹⁶ Martin Todevski, *ibid.*

¹⁷ Nadica Josifovski, *ibid.*

¹⁸ These activities of Commitment 4.1, action plan 2018–2020 are: to organize presentations and a minimum of five workshops with state institutions, CSOs, universities, and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and to organize a hackathon.

¹⁹ Gordana Gapikj Dimitrovska, Ministry of Information Society and Administration, interview by IRM researcher, 11 September 2018.

²⁰ These activities of Commitment 4.1, action Plan plan 2018–2020 are: cataloguing and publishing datasets of at least ten institutions on the new open data portal, opening a minimum of two datasets per institution, standardizing the structure of similar data sets based on an analysis of similar datasets by different institutions, and drafting a structure for publication of datasets and publication of standardized datasets by institutions that are a part of the analysis.

3. Freedom of Information

3.1. Implement FOI law

Title: Improvement and facilitation of the access to information

Better implementation of the Law on Free Access to Public Information with active involvement of the information holders and citizens.

- Pro-active publication of public information
 - o Publication of already requested/given public information on their web locations
 - o Index for monitoring pro-activity of the public information publication on the holders' web locations
- Measures for increasing access to public information
 - o Trainings for officials and managerial persons based on determined weaknesses in the Law on PRFAPI implementation
 - o Monitoring of the "damage test" implementation as a legal obligation of the holders
 - o imposing penalties for violation by officials or managerial persons within the information holders, in agreement with the Law
- Development and enforcement of a media campaign for promotion of the right to free access to public information
 - o Setting up a working group for preparation and definition of the campaign implementation plan

(The Commission for protection of the right to free access to public information – CPRFAPI, Supporting Institution(s): Center for Civil Communications, Association for Women Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality (ESE) and Open Society Foundation – Macedonia. July 2016–June 2018)

Editorial Note: This commitment text has been abridged. For full text, please see <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/macedonia-national-action-plan-2016-2018>

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm		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	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
3.1 Implement FOI law				✓	✓		✓				✓			✓		✓			✓		

Commitment Aim

The Law on Free Access to Public Information (FOI Law) is not fully implemented and citizens are often not sufficiently acquainted with all the law's stipulations concerning their access and rights. Additionally, institutions often did not implement the "damage test,"¹ which means that the FOI Law contains certain exemptions that allow institutions, as specified by law, to withhold information from a requester when the disclosure of information could damage "public interest."² These exemptions

require institutions to apply a “public interest” test, where they must assess the potential damage of disclosing information (if any) in order to deny information requests.

The aim of this commitment was threefold: proactively publish public information, introduce measures to increase access to public information (such as monitoring the implementation of “damage test”), and develop and enforce a media campaign for promoting the right to access public information.

Status

3.1. Improvement and facilitation of the access to information

Midterm: Limited

The commitment had limited implementation by midterm. The Commission for the Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information (CRFAPI) drafted and published three crucial documents listed in the action plan, including instructions to proactively publish public information, recommendations for proactive publication, and recommendations for publishing already requested and disclosed public information on institutions’ websites. The second and the third set of commitment activities were not started.

End of term: Substantial

The end-of-term completion of the commitment was substantial. Since the midterm, the first set of commitment activities have been completed: the Center for Civil Communication prepared and published the index for monitoring how proactive information holders have published information on their websites for 2017³ and 2018.⁴

The guide on the damage-test implementation was not finalized. According to CSO representatives, preparatory activities were undertaken for the damage test, and an expert to prepare the guide was contacted, but the activity was not completed due to the “inability of CSOs to communicate this activity adequately with CRFAPI.”⁵

Since the midterm, CRFAPI has begun and continued to monitor the damage-test implementation of information holders. In their 2017 annual report,⁶ there are concrete data on damage-test implementation, including cases of both adequate and inadequate implementation of the test.⁷ The preparation of a new electronic-demand submission system for access to public information, another measure listed in the action plan, is in its early phase. This system worked for several years until 2016,⁸ after which its functionality stopped.⁹

There was limited progress on the trainings for officials and managers. Due to the prolonged political crisis in the past three years, there has been significant fluctuation in directorial positions of institutions that are information holders. For two years in a row, CRFAPI was unable to start implementation. In February 2018, CRFAPI held trainings for officials in the City of Skopje. Although 20 people were invited (heads of sectors), only three attended.¹⁰ CRFAPI made a second attempt to organize a training, but did not follow through after the resignation of its President on 2 May 2018.

Besides, there have not been penalties established for cases of violation by officials of the Law on Free Access to Public Information, and the period to address access to information requests has not been reduced from 30 to 15 days, as set by the commitment.

The third set of commitment activities centered around the development of a media campaign to promote citizens’ rights under the FOI law, and they have been fully implemented, with the exception of small alterations in the format of the campaign. CRFAPI and CSO stakeholders formed a working group to prepare the implementation of the media campaign, and the working group decided that it should take place predominantly via social networks for cost-cutting purposes. The working group met on three separate occasions and was composed of two members from CRFAPI and three members from the Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women (ESE).¹¹ The campaign plan was jointly developed by all members, and later adopted by the CRFAPI. In May 2018, the video clip was posted on YouTube, ESE’s website, and on their Facebook website. The video is in Macedonian,¹² and an Albanian language version is also available.¹³

Given that more than two-thirds of the commitments' milestones are finished, but with a limited scope (understanding that a crucial milestone was not completed), the completion of this commitment is considered substantial.

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Marginal

Public Accountability: Did not change

Government practice on access to information improved marginally as a result of the activities of the commitment. Information-holding institutions have been given a concrete set of documents and indices to help them with information disclosure and guidance on how to be adequately prepared to disclose information. Similarly, the campaign created public awareness on the issue, but this process is gradual and takes time. CRFAPI officials indicated that the change in government practice was noticeable, as state institutions have started publishing the documents categorized as public information. During the interview, it was not specified how many or which state institutions have done so. On the other hand, Local Self-Government Units (LSUs) have not started to publish documents but have been encouraged to act in the same manner.¹⁴

CSO representatives interviewed for this report also noted that, according to their observations, state institutions hide information less, and they note that it has become harder for them to classify information.¹⁵ Additionally, CRFAPI has offered trainings, albeit limited in scope, analyzed the work of public institutions, and published annual statistics. In sum, trainings and guidelines are the tools through which CRFAPI is setting clearer rules and encouraging public information disclosure. At the outset of this action plan, none of these procedures were regular government practice.

The new electronic system for online submission of access to information requests is not finished; when available, this system could simplify and speed up the process for submitting information requests and could likely increase the quantity of disclosed information.

With regard to public accountability, CRFAPI reports are a way to pressure public administration to be more accountable, though "public shaming" is the only real consequence. As the introduction of penalties for officials' failure to disclose public information in line with the law has not taken place, it cannot be considered that there was any significant change in government practice for the value of public accountability.

Carried Forward?

This commitment has been carried forward to the new action plan 2018–2020 under the title "Proactive publishing, advancement of electronic access and raising awareness of citizens on their right to free access to public information." The commitment has three activities: regular and proactive publishing of public information on information holder's websites, advancing the electronic access to public information, and raising citizens' awareness and practice of their right to information.

¹ For more details, see the Annual Reports on the work of CRFAPI. The process of classifying complaints based on inappropriate implementation of the damage test began in 2017.

² "Law on Free Access to Information of Public Character", Official Gazette, available [in English] at <https://bit.ly/31TuyZ2>.

³ "Active Transparency Index 2017", Center for Civil Communications, May 2017, accessed 29 September 2018, available [in Macedonian] <http://www.ccc.org.mk/images/stories/ia2017m.pdf>.

⁴ "Active Transparency Index 2018", Center for Civil Communications, May 2018, accessed 29 September 2018, available [in Macedonian] <https://bit.ly/2pQca5n>.

⁵ Dance Danilovska -Bajdevska, FOSM, interview by IRM researcher, 29 August 2018.

⁶ Dr. Gjorgi Slamkov, "Annual Report 2017", Committee on the Protection of the Law of Freedom Access to Public Information, accessed 20 September 2018, available [in Macedonian] at <https://bit.ly/2Z1ruYV>.

⁷ Ibid., p.10. In 2017 CRFAPI notes that 29 out of 758 complaints to the CRFPI regard the damage test implementation by institutions. In 19 cases out of 29 overall the information holders did not implement the test adequately. In 2018, until April, 184 complaints were submitted and 29 regard the damage test, whereas in 28 cases the damage test implementations was not proven by information holders. In one case the test was not implemented adequately. Oliver Serafimovski, CRFAPI, interview by IRM researcher, 22 August 2018.

⁸ “Free access – Submit and browse free access information requests”, www.slobodenpristap.mk (no longer functional).

⁹ According to the old website www.slobodenpristap.mk, the “new platform is being prepared to ease the access. The activity is in its early phase and runs in continuity.”

¹⁰ Oliver Serafimovski, *ibid.*

¹¹ IRM team Macedonia is in possession of email communication on the three meetings of the working group. Formal email communication by the IRM team with Oliver Serafimovski, CRFAP, 3 September 2018.

¹² “Exercise your right to free access to public information”, YouTube video, posted by ESE Association, 9 July 2018, accessed 29 September 2018, available [in Macedonian] at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eb16t-4wGtA>.

¹³ “How to request information on the work of public institutions”, YouTube video, posted by ESE Association, 31 August 2018, accessed 29 September 2018, available [in Albanian] at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXUQyCcfj8>.

¹⁴ Oliver Serafimovski, *ibid.*

¹⁵ Dance Danilovska-Bajdevska, *ibid.*

✪4. Prevention of Corruption and Promotion of Good Governance

4.1. Implement law on whistleblower protection

Title: Implementation of the Law on Whistle-Blower Protection and raising the awareness for whistle-blowing

The Law on Whistle-Blower Protection guarantees protection of the persons in the capacity of whistle-blowers and that their rights will not be infringed when making such report, no harm will be caused to them or their close ones and they will enjoy the protection of their personal data and identity.

The implementation of the Law on Whistle-Blower Protection and the bylaws deriving therefrom, by establishing and building a system and mechanisms for protected report and protection of whistle-blowers, is of great importance for strengthening the institutional fight against corruption and in general for prevention of corruption as socially harmful phenomenon. By strengthening the public awareness for protected report, protection of whistle-blowers and their importance for the prevention and fight against corruption and protection of the public interest, the reporting of punitive or other illegal or prohibited action which harms the public interest will be stimulated and encouraged.

- Application of the Law and bylaws on protected report (determining authorized persons for accepting reports from whistle-blowers from the institutions)
- Strengthening the capacities of the authorized persons for accepting reports from whistle-blowers for efficient implementation of the Law via trainings and workshops
- Annual reports on accepted reports from whistle-blowers (data on institutions and number of accepted reports from whistle-blowers)
- Raising the awareness for whistle-blowing (campaigns and public debates, manual)

(State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC) Supporting Institution(s): Ministry of Justice, other public institutions and private sector, Transparency International Macedonia and other NGOs. July 2016–Present)

Editorial Note: This commitment text has been abridged. For full text, please see <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/macedonia-national-action-plan-2016-2018>

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	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
4.1 Implement Law on Whistleblower Protection			✓		✓		✓					✓		✓	✓				✓		

Editorial note: This commitment is clearly relevant to OGP values as written, has transformative potential impact, and is substantially or completely implemented and therefore qualifies as a starred commitment.

Commitment Aim

The Law on Whistleblowers' Protection¹ (2015) defines the responsibilities of institutions to receive and investigate reports of the possible existence of an activity constituting a violation of law, rules, or mismanagement in public institutions and ensures the protection of whistleblowers. While the law provided a strong legal basis in line with international and European standards, the number of whistleblower cases that had been made public was limited prior to the commitment.²

This commitment sought to fully implement the Whistleblower Protection Law through the following four activities: establish authorized persons to review whistleblower reports, strengthen the capacities of the authorized report reviewers, publish annual reports providing data on number of reports received from whistleblowers and the institutions concerned, and raise awareness on whistleblowing.

Status

Midterm: Limited

By July 2017, only 39 out of the 1,291³ public institutions had established authorized persons to accept and review whistleblower reports.⁴ Four trainings for public servants had been organized (from June 2016 to May 2017) in accordance with MISA's standard training program for administrative servants. In May 2017, the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC) and the Office for Enforcement of Sanctions signed a memorandum of cooperation,⁵ which produced training sessions attended by more than 50 participants. 55 public institutions submitted their semiannual reports on filed cases of whistleblowing to SCPC by June 2017, as mandated by the Whistleblower Protection Law, and the first annual reports for the period January–December 2017 were expected early 2018.⁶ A "Handbook on Protection of Whistleblowers" was released, with EU support, in September 2016.⁷

End of term: Substantial

After midterm, eight more public institutions assigned authorized persons to handle whistleblower reports⁸ by the end of 2017, bringing the total to 47 institutions out of 1,291. Some effort was made to improve the protection of whistleblowers. The Ministry of Justice submitted a draft amendment to the Law on Protection of Whistleblowers on 7 December 2017, in order to harmonize the Law with recommendations provided by the Venice Commission in Opinion No. 829/2015, from 15 March 2016.⁹ The Law on Amendment and Supplementation of the Law on Protection of Whistleblowers was adopted in February 2018, and published in *Official Gazette* No.35/18. The amendments address aspects of protected public reporting. The government tasked all ministries and other administrative bodies to publish contact information of authorized persons on their websites.¹⁰ Also available on the SCPC website are amendments to the Law, secondary legislation, reporting procedures, information on authorized persons, and reports, among others.¹¹

The government has made progress in strengthening the capacities of authorized report reviewers. Within the EU-funded project "Strengthening National capacities to Fight Organized Crime and Corruption," an expert mission was established in March 2018 to draft a strategy for promotion of whistleblowers.¹² One of the concepts produced was a program to train authorized persons to receive whistleblowing reports.¹³ In May and June 2018, the SCPC held trainings for its employees that covered, in part, the topic of whistleblowers, and some were carried to administrative servants working in other institutions. The trainings were included as part of the annual-training program for administrative servants, organized by the Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA).¹⁴ The Council of Europe organized a training of trainers for whistleblowers on 16–18 May 2018, with participants from SCPS, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, and Internal Revenue Service.¹⁵

As for the third commitment activity, the process of reports' submissions was ongoing during the time of writing this report. Four public institutions and one private institution¹⁶ had submitted a semiannual report on whistleblower submissions to the SCPC, even though they were not legally required to do so. Thus, this activity can be considered partially completed.

Regarding the fourth commitment activity, there were three notable activities implemented in the effort to raise awareness on whistleblowers. As part of the "Investigative Film Festival – Skopje" on 3 November 2017, there was a public debate on the topic of whistleblowers. Supported by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Mission in Skopje, SCPC conducted six trainings in November and December 2017, touching upon the subject of whistleblowers protection as part of the "Promoting Principles of Democratic Governance" project.¹⁷ In November 2017, SCPC signed a memorandum for Cooperation with Transparency International Macedonia to achieve the efficient application of the Law on Whistleblower Protection.¹⁸ On 3 March 2018, SCPC prepared a Strategy for Promotion of Whistleblowers in collaboration with representatives from the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Information Society and Administration, the Ombudsman, Transparency International Macedonia, and the Business Confederation of Macedonia.¹⁹ The process was supported by the EU-funded project "Strengthening National Capacities to Fight Organized Crime and Corruption," and set guidelines and measures for promotion of whistleblowers.²⁰

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Marginal

Public Accountability: Did Not Change

As a result of the commitment's implementation, SCPC adopted one annual report that was submitted to the National Assembly and showed responsive collaboration with CSOs,²¹ and it continues to publish information on their website. This marginally improves access to information on implementation of the Whistleblower Protection Law.

With regard to public accountability, the government has not changed their practice surrounding whistleblowing, despite the high expectations raised by this commitment. By the end of term, only 47 out of 1,291 public institutions have established authorized persons to receive and review protected whistleblowers' reports. Still, implementation of the Law on Whistleblowers Protection by the public sector varies from one institution to another. In institutions without a designated person to receive whistleblower reports, the reports may be submitted to a head of unit, which, according to experts, is a source of confusion and uncertainty.²²

Carried Forward?

This commitment has not been carried forward to the next action plan.²³ Nevertheless, the first three activities are legal obligations of public sector institutions and SCPC, hence expected to be continued independently from the OGP action plan.²⁴

¹ "Whistleblower Protection Law", Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia, number 196/2015.

² "Protecting Whistleblowers in Southeast Europe", Regional Anti Corruption Initiative, 2017, <https://bit.ly/2AjvP8W>.

³ MISA, 2016, http://mioa.gov.mk/files/pdf/dokumenti/Godisen_izvestaj_2016_Registar_na_vrabeteni_vo_JS.pdf

⁴ "IRM Macedonia Progress Report 2016-2017", OGP, IRM, p. 44, 1 July 2018, available at: <https://bit.ly/2nzMA36>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Please check IRM Macedonia Progress Report 2016-2017 for details on awareness-raising activities.

⁸ Vesna Doneva, advisor in the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, interview by IRM researcher, 30 August 2018.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Government Session, No 34, held 31 October 2017, <http://vlada.mk/?q=sednica/34>.

¹¹ "Whistleblower protection", Republic of Northern Macedonia State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, <https://www.dksk.mk/index.php?id=13>.

¹² Vesna Doneva, *ibid.*

¹³ <http://fighting-occ.mk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Project-Results-Summary.pdf> ; also see official website of project: <http://fighting-occ.mk/> .

¹⁴ Vesna Doneva, *ibid.*

¹⁵ “Home”, Republic of Northern Macedonia State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, <https://www.dksk.mk/index.php?id=home>.

¹⁶ Vesna Doneva, *ibid.*

¹⁷ *Idem.*

¹⁸

https://www.dksk.mk/index.php?id=34&L=0&tx_news_pi1%5Bnews%5D=516&tx_news_pi1%5Bcontroller%5D=News&tx_news_pi1%5Baction%5D=detail&cHash=46c41f0cb16792e2b469ab5f15d2bf4c.

¹⁹

https://dksk.mk/index.php?id=34&tx_news_pi1%5Bnews%5D=525&tx_news_pi1%5Bcontroller%5D=News&tx_news_pi1%5Baction%5D=detail&cHash=fadab9981fe42d2e12f0359ccdc9f20f.

²⁰ Vesna Doneva, *ibid.*

²¹ Misha Popovic, Institute for Democracy ‘Societas Civilis’, interview by IRM researcher, 17 August 2018; Aleksandar Cekov, CRPM, interview by IRM researcher, 22 August 2018.

²² Misha Popovic, *ibid.*

²³ “Open Government National Action Plan 2018-2020”, Open Government Partnership, p. 6, July 2018, available at <https://bit.ly/2InElf0>.

²⁴ Misha Popovic, *ibid.*

4.2. Open data on asset declarations

Title: Open data on property status of elected and appointed persons

SCPC publishes the data on the property status and changes in the property status of the elected and appointed persons; however, due to the non-existence of software solution, it is impossible to have an insight and historical review of all reported changes in the property status as of the time when the such persons assumed their functions until the time they cease to perform their function. The openness of the data on asset declarations of the elected and appointed persons via their chronological publication and historical review in continuity is essential for overall insight and display of the property status and changes in the property status of the elected and appointed persons as of the time of assuming their function until the cessation thereof. Prerequisite for realization of the obligation is designing and establishing software solution which will provide insight in form of open data.

Increased openness of the data on the property status of elected and appointed persons. The entire insight and monitoring of the property status and the changes in the property status will increase the accountability and responsibility of the elected and appointed persons.

- Creating technical conditions for publishing asset declarations in form of open data (created and established software solution)
- Establishing historical review of the changes in the property status of the elected and appointed persons

(State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC). 2017–2018)

Editorial Note: This commitment text has been abridged. For full text, please see <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/macedonia-national-action-plan-2016-2018>

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	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
4.2 Open Data on Asset Declarations				✓	✓			✓			✓			✓				✓			

Commitment Aim

In accordance with the Law on Prevention of Corruption,¹ elected and appointed officials are required to declare their assets and property within 30 days of election, termination, and change of their property. The State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC) is responsible for receiving, registering, and verifying asset declarations, and the Commission publishes this data on its website.² Additionally, the SCPC website is updated to reflect all reported changes in officials' assets. This commitment aimed to develop a software solution to publish (in open format) and provide a historical overview of officials' asset declarations during their time in office.

Status

Midterm: Limited

By October 2017, within the scope of the IPA Twinning Project, a software solution has been developed to provide both current and past property ownership status of officials. Setting up a historic archive with information on current officials' changes in property ownership had stalled due to legal barriers.³ Making mandatory online submissions and reporting required initiating a process for amending the Law for Prevention of Corruption. As of late 2017, this process had not been started.⁴

End of term: Limited

By the end of term, there has been no further progress regarding commitment activities.

The software solution developed within the IPA Twinning project "Support for Efficient Prevention and Fight Against Corruption" remains unused. No progress was noted on legal amendments that would enable the use of this software for overview of historic data, regarding the declared assets of acting public sector officials.⁵

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Did Not Change

Although the development and utilization of a software solution would have provided insight to and the historical review of all reported changes in the property status of elected and appointed public sector officials, the implementation of this software has been stalled since October 2017. At present, asset declarations are still submitted in hardcopy⁶ and data is entered in the existing registry of appointed and elected persons, which is faulty and not updated regularly.⁷

Carried Forward?

This commitment has been carried forward and expanded in the next action plan for 2018–2020. The commitment has been reformulated as "An advanced mechanism for monitoring the property status of elected and appointed officials" under "Theme 2: Integrity and Good Governance." Its main objective is to establish a functional system that will simplify the assessment of elected and appointed persons' property status and make this information publicly available.⁸ The commitment envisions five activities, including the revision of the content of asset declarations, analyzing the functional failures of the register of elected and appointed persons and starting the renewed electronic system of filing for asset declarations. In addition, the commitment envisions establishing a system for the continuous publication of asset declarations in an open and machine-readable format.⁹

¹ "Law on Prevention of Corruption", Official Gazette, available [in English] at <https://bit.ly/337w4H6>.

² "Register of Elected/Appointed Persons", State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, <https://register.dksk.org.mk/Public/Submissions#/SubmissionList>.

³ Ibid, p.46.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Vesna Doneva, advisor in the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, interview by IRM researcher, 30 August 2018.

⁶ Misha Popovic, Institute for Democracy 'Societas Civilis', interview by IRM researcher, 17 August 2018.

⁷ "Register of Elected/Appointed Persons", *ibid*.

⁸ "Open Government National Action Plan 2018-2020", Open Government Partnership, p. 21, July 2018, available at <https://bit.ly/2InElf0>.

⁹ Ibid, p.22.

4.3. Monitor integrity of LSUs

Title: Promotion of integrity, transparency and accountability on local level and monitoring the progress

Considering the policies for more dynamic and sustainable economic and social development of LSGU, entirely directed towards the citizens and the realization of their rights, with the strong determination to cope with corruption and unethical conduct, 47 municipalities in cooperation with SCPC have signed anti-corruption policies/integrity policies. It is necessary this process to continue and to be entirely completed by signing anticorruption policies by all LSGU, thus establishing overall system of mechanisms and procedures which tighten the space and possibilities for corruption and affirm the principles of the rule of law. The promotion of integrity in the institutions on local level is focused towards prevention and non-tolerance of conduct prohibited by law which is contrary to the ethical code and any form of corruptive conduct in the operation of the municipalities. At the same time, the capacities for supervising anti-corruptive practices on local level will be built and strengthened. The transparency and accountability of the institutions on local level ensure promotion of their openness by involving the public in the creation of the policies of good governance, integrity and prevention of the risks of corruption. The innovative tools for openness and responsibility (via IT tools, responsibility, transparency and accountability index and integrity index of the municipalities) are in the capacity of creating a culture of responsiveness of the local self-government units. The measures determined in this effort will ensure promotion of the openness of the institutions on local level by involving the citizen organizations in the creation of indexes, monitoring and assessment of good governance and integrity of the local self-government units.

(State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC); Supporting Institution(s): Local Self-Government Units, Center for Research and Policy Making (CRPM) and other NGOs. June 2016–June 2018)

4.4. Promote cooperation to prevent corruption

Title: Promotion of cooperation and increased proactivity in the prevention of corruption and conflict of interests

The civil organizations in cooperation with the institutions actively monitor and participate in initiatives for monitoring and fight against corruption and are active partner in the process of establishing good governance. The action of the competent bodies, as well as the separated preventive anti-corruption projects and activities of the civil sector will not provide the expected results if sustainable system of cooperation is not established between all relevant actors, considering their specifics, as well as the determined legal competences.

- Of great importance is the holding of periodical coordinative work meetings where specific topics or projects from the area of corruption and conflict of interests will be discussed with proposals and recommendations for undertaking future activities and measures for improvement of the conditions. This will contribute to intensifying the implementation of the established general frame for cooperation for prevention of corruption, with visible results and establishing systematic approach for exchange of information and data, proposals and recommendations which will be discussed and considered from the relevant factors that handle issues from this area.
- For the purpose of bigger involvement, the civil organizations should develop methodologies for monitoring the corruption as a mechanism and approach for measuring the perceptions of the citizens and their experiences with regards to the exposure to corruption. The civil organizations should transfer the experiences from such methodologies and the results so that they can be included in the development of one all-encompassing and long-term system for prevention of corruption and conflict of interests and establishing good governance.
- In direction to informing and introducing the public with the effects from the cooperation, public events-debates will be organized, as well as workshops and thematic conferences and campaigns for raising the awareness of the public regarding the corruption and conflict of interests.

(State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC); Supporting Institution(s): Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MLSP), Ministry of Local Self-Government (MLSG), Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC), Institute for Democracy 'Societas

Civilis' (IDSC), Center for Research and Policy Making (CRPM), Transparency International Macedonia, ADI. July 2016–Present)

Editorial Note: Commitments 4.3 and 4.4 both aim to tackle corruption and promote cooperation between the government and relevant CSOs and have been clustered together. This commitment text has been abridged. For full text, please see

<https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/macedonia-national-action-plan-2016-2018>

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	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
4.3 Monitor Integrity of LSUs			✓		Unclear					✓				✓				✓			
4.4 Promote Cooperation to Prevent Corruption			✓			✓				✓					✓				✓		

Commitment Aim

Commitments 4.3 and 4.4 center on creating a cooperative space to fight corruption on local level. The State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC), as part of a previous OGP action plan, encouraged 47 municipalities to sign anticorruption policies. Commitment 4.3 aimed to continue this process and to involve citizen organizations in the creation of indices to monitor and assess local self-government units (LSUs). This commitment had two activities: to have all LSUs sign anticorruption policies and to create the integrity index and the responsibility, transparency, and accountability index of the municipalities.¹

Commitment 4.4 aimed to establish sustainable cooperation between government actors and CSOs by holding coordination meetings, developing methodologies to monitor corruption and conflict of interest, and promoting the results of these activities through public events.²

Status

4.3. Monitor integrity of LSUs

Midterm: Limited

As of October 2017, no additional municipalities had signed the anticorruption policies. In June 2016, the Minister of Local Self-Government (MLSG) signed the Integrity Policy, making this ministry the first institution at the central level to adopt the initiative. In cooperation with SCPC, MLSG prepared an updated version of the Integrity Policy, in accordance with the latest legal changes pertaining to the protection of whistleblowers. The document was published on the government's web portal.³ The Center for Research and Policy Making (CRPM) created two indices: 1) Index of responsibility, transparency, and accountability, and 2) Index of integrity in municipalities.⁴

End of term: Limited

By the end of the implementation period, August 2018, the IRM team was informed that no other municipalities had signed the anticorruption policies.⁵

Additionally, there has been no substantial progress regarding the supervision of LSUs based on the two created indices. Misha Popovic, from the Institute for Democracy 'Societas Civilis' (IDSC) stated that "this [supervision] did not happen" under the OGP process.⁶ CRPM continued, through another project, to cooperate with LSUs, more recently on gender-responsive budgeting, which narrowly touched upon integrity policies and participatory policymaking. The integrity assessment (Integrity Index and Index of responsibility, transparency, and accountability of LSUs) was not updated by SCPC in collaboration with CRPM.⁷

4.4. Promote cooperation to prevent corruption

Midterm: Substantial

The Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC) carried out a project that established an external methodology for monitoring the efficiency of SCPC's anticorruption work.⁸ MCIC promoted its findings publicly at a conference on 30 March 2017, attended by more than 40 participants from civil society, government institutions, media, and representatives from the SCPC (the leading institution tasked with implementing the overall commitment). MCIC also hosted a forum in May titled "Prevention of Corruption – Leadership and Coordination in Macedonia," attended by more than 50 participants.⁹

End of term: Substantial

According to members of the Platform for the Fight against Corruption¹⁰ (a coalition of CSOs founded in 2014), since October 2017, five meetings were organized within the platform and three meetings were organized independently by CSOs that tackle anticorruption.¹¹ Although they did touch upon the issues targeted by this commitment activity, they were not organized in connection to this commitment.¹² SCPC held a working meeting with members of Transparency International Macedonia¹³ and one meeting with the Platform for the Fight against Corruption¹⁴ in October 2017.

In order to establish a sustainable system of cooperation between government actors and CSOs, SCPC signed the following three memorandums. First, SCPC established a Memorandum for Collaboration with MCIC, which created a mechanism for the quarterly disclosure of information from the List of Information of Public Character in possession of SCPC.¹⁵ Second, in November 2017, SCPC and Transparency International Macedonia signed a Memorandum for Collaboration, with the intent to perform activities of common interest, deriving from the project "Strengthening the National Integrity System in the Western Balkan Countries and Turkey and Monitoring Anticorruption Reforms Progress." Third, in December 2017, SCPC and the Institute for Democracy – Societas Civilis (IDSC) signed a Memorandum for Collaboration within the project "Anticorruption Education of High School Students."¹⁶

Besides, SCPC participated in public events to promote the aforementioned activities until March 2018.¹⁷ SCPC participated in two conferences organized by MCIC: "Model of Preventive Anticorruption Body: How the Current Model works and Does it need Changing" on 9 October 2017 and "Fight Against Corruption – A Challenge for Common Action by Citizens and Institutions" on 28 March 2018.¹⁸ During the former, MCIC presented its findings on monitoring the work of SCPC (from January to March 2017 and from April to June 2017).¹⁹

Did It Open Government?

4.3. Monitor integrity of LSUs

Access to Information: Did not change

Civic Participation: Did not change

Public Accountability: Did not change

This commitment contained activities to address corruption at the local level.²⁰ Although the government aimed to have additional municipalities sign anti-corruption policies, none did. In contrast, the creation of the indices by CRPM marked a significant first step for civil society to monitor LSUs. However, this contribution by a single CSO does not reflect any change in government practice regarding civic participation²¹.

4.4. Promote cooperation to prevent corruption

Civic Participation: Marginal

The methodology to monitor the work carried out by SCPC was developed and utilized by the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC). Throughout the whole process, SCPC showed openness and was receptive to input by CSOs, as confirmed by the interviewed official from SCPC and CSO representatives.²² For example, CSO representatives participated in the parliamentary committee, interviewing the candidates to the new SCPC, according to the Law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest. These instances overall represent a positive shift in government practice towards nurturing civic participation in the fight against corruption.

Carried Forward?

Commitments 4.3 and 4.4 were not carried over to the next action plan.²³ However, the IRM team encourages LSUs and SCPC to continue publicizing corruption index results and promote the regular updating and publication of indexes.

According to CSO representatives involved in the commitment activity, this commitment was included in the 2016–2018 action plan because of the distrust between the government and civil society at the time. However, a good, collaborative relationship between the government and civil society should also be achieved outside of the OGP process.²⁴

¹ “IRM Macedonia Progress Report 2016-2017”, OGP, IRM, p. 48, 1 July 2018, available at: <https://bit.ly/2nzMA36>.

² Ibid.

³ Local Self Governing Unit Anticorruption Policies, Ministry of Local Self Government, 15 June 2016, http://mls.gov.mk/images/documents/Politika%20na%20integritet_.pdf.

⁴ Ibid, p.49.

⁵ Based on interviews by IRM researcher with Vesna Doneva, advisor in the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, 30 August 2018; Misha Popovic, Institute for Democracy ‘Societas Civilis’, 17 August 2018; and Aleksandar Cekov, CRPM, 22 August 2018.

⁶ Misha Popovic, *ibid*.

⁷ Vesna Doneva, *ibid*.

⁸ MCIC matrix of indicators for evaluating the efficiency of SCPC anticorruption projects, <http://www.mcims.org.mk/images/docs/2017/matrice-na-indikatori-dsk.pdf>, also in Macedonia IRM Progress Report 2017, p. 49.

⁹ Ibid, p.49.

¹⁰ As stated in the open government action plan, “In order to regulate the manner of cooperation, coordination and mutually agreed activities with the civil sector, SCPC in December 2010 initiated signing of Memorandum for mutual support to prevent corruption and conflict of interests with 17 NGO, whereby their number increased to 22 NGO until 2014 inclusive. The activities encompassed with the Memorandum refer to the exchange of information and initiatives from the area of corruption and conflict of interests, analyses and researches, holding meetings and other events for raising the public awareness, mutual professional cooperation for anti-corruption education and training as well as in the course of legal regulation and realization of projects of interest for fight against corruption and conflict of interests”. See “Open Government National Action Plan 2016-2018”, OGP, p. 37, 14 July 2016, <https://bit.ly/2lt9sZl>.

¹¹ Aleksandar Cekov, *ibid*.

¹² Misha Popovic, *ibid*; and Aleksandar Cekov, *ibid*.

¹³ “Announcement”, Republic of Northern Macedonia State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, 13 October 2017, <https://bit.ly/337PZpA>.

¹⁴ “Announcement for a working meeting with the representatives of the CSO Platform for fight against corruption”, Republic of Northern Macedonia State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, 16 October 2017, <https://bit.ly/2LOdl8q>.

¹⁵ Vesna Doneva, *ibid*.

¹⁶ Ibid. Also: “SCPC and Institute for Democracy - Societas Civilis - Skopje sign Memorandum of Cooperation”, Republic of Northern Macedonia State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, 18 December 2017, <https://bit.ly/335Nrbl>.

¹⁷ Misha Popovic, *ibid*.

¹⁸ “Participation in the conference “Fight against corruption - a challenge for the joint action of citizens and institutions”, Republic of Northern Macedonia State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, 29 March 2018, <https://bit.ly/2ohoBqg>.

¹⁹ “Presentation of a report on the work of the SCPC”, Republic of Northern Macedonia State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, 9 October, 2017, <https://bit.ly/2OpuIdm>.

²⁰ Misha Popovic, *ibid*.

²¹ *Idem*; Aleksandar Cekov, *ibid*; and Vesna Doneva, *ibid*.

²² Misha Popovic, *ibid*; and Aleksandar Cekov, *ibid*.

²³ “Open Government National Action Plan 2018-2020”, Open Government Partnership, p. 6, July 2018, available at <https://bit.ly/2InElf0>.

²⁴ *Ibid*.

5. Efficient Management of Public Resources

✪5.1. Open budget initiative

Increased transparency in public funds management through:

- Presentation of the state budget in simplified form understandable to citizens and easily available.
- Informing the public about projected revenues and expenditures at the beginning of the year on a quarterly basis, thus providing an opportunity for analysis and comparison of the implementation of the budget in view of the planned.
- Informing the public regarding our semi-annual implementation of the Budget of the Republic of Macedonia

Approximation of the most important budget document to the citizens and providing additional information to citizens and civil society organizations regarding the design and execution of the state budget will contribute to greater involvement of civil society in monitoring and analyzing the performance of the budget.

(Ministry of Finance; Supporting institution(s): Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women in Macedonia (ESE), Center for Economic Analysis, Zenith Association. July 2016–June 2018)

5.9. Increase transparency in public finances management

Title: Determination of data on state assistance to be published and their publication

Increased transparency in public finances management, through: Publication of data on all grounds of state assistance for foreign investments (specification of granted and paid on all grounds). Data are published at least once a year without giving the name of the company. Categorized data are published as a minimum by different grounds, with specification of the granted and paid assistance to foreign investors. The measures of this commitment contribute for improvement of transparency and accountability of the public finance managing institutions through increase transparency and accountability in public funds management in the field of state assistance for foreign investments.

(Commission for competition protection (CCP); Supporting institution(s): Agency for financial support in agriculture and rural development, Directorate for technological industrial development zones (DTIRZ), ministries for encouraging foreign investments and other budget users, Center for Economic Analysis, Center for Civil Communications. August 2016–Present)

Editorial Note: Commitments 5.1 and 5.9 were clustered based on their shared focus of budget and financial transparency. The commitments' text has been abridged. For full text, please see <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/macedonia-national-action-plan-2016-2018>

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	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
✪5.1 Open Budget Initiative				✓	✓	✓						✓			✓					✓	
5.9 Increase Transparency in			✓		✓						✓		✓						✓		



Editorial note: Commitment 5.1 is clearly relevant to OGP values as written, has transformative potential impact, and is substantially or completely implemented and therefore qualifies as a starred commitment.

Commitment Aim

According to the 2017 Open Budget Index, Macedonia made five of eight key budget documents publicly available online in a timeframe consistent with international standards.¹ Commitment 5.1 aimed to improve budget transparency by publishing the remaining three budget documents on the Ministry of Finance's (MoF) website. These include a citizens' budget, a projection of revenues and expenditures of the state budget, and a semiannual report regarding the implementation of the state budget.

Commitment 5.9 aimed to publish data on all grounds of state assistance for foreign investments (categorized data of aid granted and paid, without publishing names of companies). Its purpose was to address the lack of transparency regarding state aid given to foreign companies in Macedonia. Although the Commission for Competition Protection (CCP) publishes annual reports on state assistance provided to foreign companies, CSOs object that no data is available on the amounts of state assistance (or tax benefits) given to specific companies, and they argue that aggregated data on state assistance are not being published.

Status

5.1. Open budget initiative

Midterm: Substantial

This commitment was substantially completed by the midterm. The Ministry of Finance (MoF) published Macedonia's first citizen's budget on 23 August 2017 (after the mid-term evaluation). The budget is available in three languages: Macedonian, Albanian and English. The English version is available at [https://www.finance.gov.mk/files/GB%20Final%20MK%20\(3\).pdf](https://www.finance.gov.mk/files/GB%20Final%20MK%20(3).pdf).

The second commitment activity, publishing projected revenues and expenditures of the state budget, was postponed for 2018.

The third commitment activity, publishing a semiannual report regarding the implementation of the state budget, was also slightly behind schedule. Several CSOs had pointed out that a similar document had already been published. Representatives from the MoF were aware of these objections and stated that the MoF had "taken considerable steps to improve the publication of documents"² by using Excel format, providing a wider set of data, and including a monthly breakdown, among others.

End of term: Substantial

By end of term, the commitment's completion remains mostly unchanged. As for the first commitment activity, the practice of publishing the citizens' budget (civil budget) has continued in 2018. It is easily accessible on the MoF website and is in user-friendly, simplified format.³ CSOs express satisfaction with the format of the citizens' budget and its structure.⁴ The IRM team could not find the Albanian and the English version of the citizens' budget on the MoF website.

As for the second commitment activity, MoF has informed the IRM team that the projected revenues and expenditures of the state budget do not cover the complete budget and are not being published quarterly, two requirements stated in the action plan.⁵ The MoF stated that they have "a similar document for internal use (not publicly available) which is corrected if a rebalancing of the budget takes place within the fiscal year."⁶ Two different CSOs⁷ have informed the IRM team that they are not aware of such a document, and it is not available. One CSO representative pointed out that MoF needs to make further efforts to publish the document.⁸

The third commitment activity is complete. MoF regularly publishes the semiannual report regarding the implementation of the state budget (for both 2017 and 2018) on its website, in a satisfactory

format.⁹ CSOs consider the publication format to be sufficiently detailed, and the only objection would be to the PDF format, because it is hard to manipulate.¹⁰ The semiannual reports are available only in Macedonian language.

5.9. Increase transparency in public finances management

Midterm: Not Started

The commitment was not started within the OGP process by the mid-term assessment. However, shortly after the mid-term period expired (15 July 2017), the new Government of the Republic of Macedonia started the process to disclose and declassify all agreements with foreign investors, including state assistance. Although this measure was not directly related to OGP, it served as a push factor for the CCP to disclose more detailed information of state assistance in upcoming reports.

End of term: Limited

Since the midterm, limited progress has been made. In the annual report for 2017,¹¹ CCP disclosed information on state assistance in the format of aggregate sums (in denars and euros) of state assistance as well as the number of the decision and the date, the purpose, the grantor, and the grantee. However, the report does not list any state assistance provided to foreign companies in 2017. All entities that received state aid were public institutions and programs. Furthermore, data is broken down in two categories: regional investment aid in 2017 and state assistance different from regional aid. Both categories are given as lump sums, and are not further broken down.

Did it Open Government?

5.1. Open budget initiative

Access to Information: Major

Civic Participation: Did not change

The lack of transparency surrounding the state budget and its management by the MoF has been a long-standing challenge for the Republic of Macedonia. This commitment introduced three crucial budget documents: a citizens' budget, a projection of revenues and expenditures of the state budget, and a semiannual report regarding the implementation of the state budget. The publication of these three documents represents a major change and has significantly opened government with respect to access to budget information.

The introduction of the citizens' budget is a significant measure: for the first time, a simplified and well-structured version of the state budget is available and easily accessible through a simple online search (google search "gragjanski budzet na RM"). Both MoF officials and CSO activists agree that "the commitment contributed to a great extent to opening the government,"¹² and "every denar [penny] that the state spends is now under the scrutiny of the general public for the first time in history."¹³ On the other hand, the projection of the state revenues and budget gives the opportunity to the qualified public to analyze possible underspending or overspending by the state, performance of fiscal policies, efficacy of the tax system, etc.

The publication of the semiannual report regarding the implementation of the state budget addresses specific stakeholders such as CSOs, financial analysts, the banking sector, companies, and think-tanks. The report contains well-structured data that stakeholders can use for financial analysis and informed participation regarding the realization of the budget. The quantity of data is solid, although the format is closed (PDF). As this kind of document "did not exist and was not publicly available prior to the commitment introduction,"¹⁴ the publication of the semiannual report is also a novelty. With this measure, the qualified public—in particular CSOs working on economy, public policy, and transparency—is well-informed on the implementation of the state budget and is equipped with useful information to participate in public debates on issues regarding the budget and projection of revenues and expenditures.

5.9. Increase transparency in public finances management

Access to Information: Marginal

Prior to the beginning of this commitment, the Commission for Competition Protection (CCP) did not publish the sums of state aid (in denars or euros) in its annual reports. In 2018, as part of this commitment, CCP publicly disclosed the sums of state aid given to all entities, but the information covers the period prior to 2017. Additionally, a prescreening of the annual report by the IRM team does not list any state assistance provided to foreign companies. CCP officials agreed that the commitment was “the first step towards greater transparency in this segment and that transparency should be further determined in the following period.”¹⁵

CCP annual reports present general categories (such as decision number, grantor, aim of the grant, amount in denars and in euros). More specifically, CSOs indicate that the data given by the CCP is hard to locate online, is too general and not sufficiently broken down, as well as hard to manipulate.¹⁶

Carried Forward?

Neither Commitment 5.1 nor Commitment 5.9 were carried forward to the next action plan. Since Commitment 5.1 was substantially (and successfully) implemented, stakeholders did not feel the need to take it forward. However, MoF has informed the IRM team that they will continue to improve the citizens’ budget outside of the OGP process.¹⁷ MoF plans to introduce videos, games, smart questionnaire, and a plug-in on the MoF website that would take the user to a specific institution and its financial data.¹⁸

The reason Commitment 5.9 was not carried forward was due mostly to loss of interest by CSOs, as well as the absence of state assistance and aid to foreign companies, which makes the continuation of the commitment irrelevant. However, the IRM team strongly recommends that the CCP and other CSO stakeholders continue defining the scope of the state-aid data to be published (precisely defining all categories for breaking down the data), as well as the format of the report (the format should allow data manipulation).

¹ “Open Budget Survey Results: Macedonia”, International Budget Partnership, 2017, <https://bit.ly/31LxNlf>.

² Representatives of Minister of Finance, interview by IRM researcher, 24 August 2017.

³ “The citizens’ budget for 2017”, Ministry of Finance, accessed 7 September 2018, is available [in Macedonian] at <https://www.finance.gov.mk/files/u3/Gragjanski%20Budjet.pdf>; “The citizens’ budget for 2018”, Ministry of Finance, accessed 7 September 2018, is available [in Macedonian] at <https://www.finance.gov.mk/files/Gragjanski%202018.pdf>.

⁴ Gabriela Dimovska, Center for Economic Analysis, interview by IRM researcher, 21 August 2018.

⁵ Viktor Mitevski, Ministry of Finance, interview by IRM researcher, 30 August 2018.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Gabriela Dimovska, *ibid.* Aleksandar Nikolovski, ZENIT, interview by IRM researcher, 24 August 2018.

⁸ Gabriela Dimovska, *ibid.*

⁹ “The semi-annual performance report of the Budget of the Republic of Macedonia for 2017”, Ministry of Finance, accessed 7 September 2018, available [in Macedonian] at <https://bit.ly/359nLfU>; “The semi-annual performance report of the Budget of the Republic of Macedonia for 2018”, Ministry of Finance, accessed 7 September 2018, available [in Macedonian] at <https://bit.ly/2AXzhxb>.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ “Annual Report 2017”, CCP, 31 March 2018, <http://kzk.gov.mk/годишен-извештај-2017>. Prior to its publication, the annual report was given in hard copy to IRM team—Macedonia during the personal interview with CCP representative in the OGP process, Ms. Malinka Nikolic, on 31 August 2018.

¹² Malinka Nikolic, CCP, Interview by IRM researcher, 31 August 2018.

¹³ Viktor Mitevski, *ibid.*

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Malinka Nikolic, *ibid.*

¹⁶ Gabriela Dimovska, *ibid.*

¹⁷ Viktor Mitevski, *ibid.*

¹⁸ Ibid.

5.2. Open Data on Health Programs

This is an ongoing commitment addressing the denied access to information on the spending of funds from the budget of the Ministry of Health intended for health programs. In cooperation with Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women in Macedonia, Ministry of Health will prepare a standardized report format to be used for publication of data from the realization of budget assets by the Ministry of Health intended for preventive and curative health programs.

- Preparation and publication of semi-annual and annual reports on budget and program implementation of 20 programs for preventative and curative health care financed by the budget of the Ministry of Health with technical assistance and support from the ESE
- Campaign for providing citizens with information on these data availability and how they can be of their benefit

(Ministry of Health; Supporting institution(s): Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women in Macedonia (ESE). July 2016–June 2018)

5.7. Strengthen capacities of the Ministry of Health

Title: Increased budgetary fund benefits in preventative and curative health protection for citizens

Spending budgetary funds of the Ministry of Health for services that are not delivered to the citizens. At the same time, differences have been noted between data presented in reports on the program realization in the Ministry of Health and those presented by various executors. Also, differences have been noted between reports and real implementation.

Building capacities in the Ministry of Health for application of the social accountability methodology with a technical assistance and support by a non-government organization authorized and trained for implementation of the methodology recognized and accepted in developed countries.

- The social accountability methodologies provide measurement, monitoring, reporting and performance improvement in public institutions. They allow monitoring of the real implementation and benefits for the citizens provided with the implementation of the Ministry of Health's programs.
- In order to build capacities for the social accountability methodology implementation, the Ministry of Health with technical assistance by a non-government organization authorized and trained for the methodology implementation, will select 10 people from the Ministry of Health and from public health institutions to attend the social accountability training.
- For piloting one of the social accountability methodologies selected by the MH, the Ministry of Health will select a preventive or curative program and engage the 10 people who have attended the social accountability training to design a plan for the selected methodology piloting and to implement the selected methodology in the selected program.

Citizens' involvement allowed by this methodology will advance transparency and accountability of the Ministry and other public health institutions, and will contribute for better health resources management.

(Ministry of Health (MH); Supporting institution(s): Public health facilities, executors of the preventive and curative health protection programs, Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality (ESE) and Open Society Foundation – Macedonia. July 2016–Present)

Editorial Note: Commitments 5.2 and 5.7 were clustered due to their shared focus on improving preventative and curative health programs. The Ministry of Health is the lead institution responsible for both commitments. The commitments' text has been abridged. For full text, please see <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/macedonia-national-action-plan-2016-2018>

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	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
5.2 Open Data on Health Programs				✓	✓						✓			✓					✓		
5.7 Strengthen Capacities of the Ministry of Health				✓	Unclear						✓			✓				✓			

Commitment Aim

The following two commitments specifically focused on improving the transparency and accountability of preventative and curative health programs. Commitment 5.2 aimed to improve access to information on health programs (financed by the Ministry of Health)¹ by publishing semiannual reports on the budget and implementation of 20 preventative and curative health programs, and launching a campaign on the availability and benefit of such data.²

Under Commitment 5.7, the Ministry of Health (MoH) aimed to collaborate with an NGO to select and train 10 MoH officials on the implementation of social accountability methodologies and to select a preventative or curative program to pilot new social accountability methodologies.³

Status

5.2. Open Data on Health Programs

Midterm: Limited

The commitment's completion was limited by the midterm, although projected activities began on schedule. MoH, in cooperation with Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality (ESE) Skopje, developed templates for the preparation of the semiannual and annual reports on the budget and program implementation of 20 programs for preventative and curative healthcare. The templates proposed by ESE needed approval by the Minister of Health, but this did not happen by the midterm assessment. Promotional activities were scheduled to begin after.

End of term: Substantial

By the end of term, the commitment was substantially completed. Since October 2017, representatives from ESE and MoH have held regular meetings (at least one a month) throughout the monitored period.⁴ As initially stated in the action plan, MoH intended to publish both semiannual and annual reports on the budget and program implementation of preventative and curative health programs. However, in accordance with the Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA), it was agreed that all reports would instead be published annually.⁵ 19 out of 20 reports were published on the MoH website in June 2018.⁶ The creation of a promotional campaign, the second commitment activity, was not started.⁷

5.7. Strengthen capacities of the Ministry of Health

Midterm: Limited

This commitment's completion was limited by the midterm. The training for 10 people from MoH (and other health institutions) on implementing social accountability methodologies was not started. In regard to the second commitment activity, ESE held a meeting on 19 December 2016 to suggest

the application of social accountability methodologies on all 20 health-protection programs. ESE later narrowed the selection to two programs, although the final decision rested with MoH.⁸

The third activity—designing a pilot plan for the social accountability methodology and its implementation in the selected program—had not been started.⁹

End of term: Limited

By September 2018, this commitment's completion was still limited. MoH did not conduct training on the implementation of social accountability methodologies. However, some progress was made with regard to the design of the pilot plan, the third commitment activity. On 5 June 2018, MoH selected the pilot program proposed by ESE, "Program for population protection from HIV/AIDS in the Republic of Macedonia."¹⁰ The program's first meeting was scheduled for 13 September 2018.¹¹

Did it Open Government?

5.2. Open Data on Health Programs

Access to information: Marginal

MoH has improved access to information by publishing 19 annual reports (out of 20 intended). The expected outreach of these reports remains low without proper promotional activities to popularize their findings among the general public. This is the first time such volume of targeted information is published; the information provided is extensive, detailed, specific, and technical. Hence, this commitment represented a marginal contribution to access to information.¹²

5.7. Strengthen capacities of the Ministry of Health

Access to information: Did not Change

Civic Participation: Did not Change

Public Accountability: Did not Change

As written, this commitment was not clearly relevant to OGP values, as it aimed to strengthen the capacity of the MoH and did not contain a public-facing activity. With limited level of implementation, the commitment did not end up having any results relevant to open government.

Carried Forward?

Commitments 5.2 and 5.7 were carried forward to the next action plan as part of the third theme, Fiscal Transparency. The new commitment is titled "Promoting Transparency in the implementation of health programs and establishing a cost impact assessment mechanism from these programs on end-users through citizens' inclusion."¹³ It contains two objectives: continue publishing reports on the implementation of the MoH's preventative and curative health care programs, and develop and pilot a methodology to assess the impact of the "Program for population protection from HIV/AIDS."¹⁴

¹ "Open Government National Action Plan 2016-2018", Open Government Partnership, p. 42, July 2018, available at <https://bit.ly/2lt9sZl>.

² Idem, p. 43.

³ Ibid, p. 53.

⁴ Darko Antik, Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women in Macedonia (ESE), interview by IRM researcher, 29 August 2018; Biljana Babushkova, Head of Internal Audit Unit, Ministry of Health, interview by IRM researcher, 13 September 2018.

⁵ Biljana Babushkova, *ibid*.

⁶ "REPORTS", Ministry of Health, <http://zdravstvo.gov.mk/izveshtai/>.

⁷ Darko Antik, *ibid*; Biljana Babushkova, *ibid*.

⁸ *Ibid*.

⁹ *Ibid*, p.55.

¹⁰ Darko Antik, *ibid*; Biljana Babushkova, *ibid*.

¹¹ A member of the IRM team Macedonia was present at the Ministry of Health, just before the working session began, i.e. met with representatives from ESE and an official from MoH.

¹² According to the Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women in Macedonia (ESE), the reports follow a standard and comply with intended scope of information. A desk review by IRM staff of the 19 reports concluded they hold data on the number of patients covered, the costs of each procedure etc. Apart from procedures including surgeries and treatments, the reports hold information on equipment and trainings, among others.

¹³ “Open Government National Action Plan 2018-2020”, Open Government Partnership, p. 29, July 2018, available at <https://bit.ly/2InElf0>.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 31.

5.3. Mandatory Publication of Public Procurement Information

Title: Creating a legal obligation for the contracting authorities for mandatory publication of information regarding the public procurement contracts on their websites

The obligation resulting from the second Action Plan of OGP (2014-2016) to determine the minimum information from public procurement, that contracting authorities should publish on their websites by Bureau's recommendation, is voluntary and is not respected by many contracting authorities. Each contracting authority shall publish the annual procurement plan, information with a link to ESPP regarding public procurement calls and public procurement contracts and must also complete the part for realized contracts of ESPN.

Compulsory publication of this information which are now voluntary will increase: Transparency and accountability of public institutions regarding public money spending; The degree of awareness of citizens on the manner their money are spent; Integrity and trust in institutions; Efficiency in public funds management.

(Ministry of Finance, Bureau for Public Procurement; Supporting institution(s): contracting authorities, Civil Communications Center. July 2016–June 2018)

5.6. Introduce concession contacts register

Title: Introduction of a publicly accessible register of concession contracts

Insufficient access to public information on concluded contracts and concessions, as well as contracts concluded between state institutions and private subjects, as opposed to the existing transparency of concluded public procurement contracts, which are basically.

The Ministry of Economy should create a register of concluded contracts and concessions, and make it available with regular updating on its Internet website. Ensuring a certain degree of transparency for more efficient public funds management.

(Ministry of Economy; Supporting institution(s): Center for Civil Communication. July 2016–June 2018)

Editorial Note: Commitments 5.3 and 5.6 both aim to increase transparency around public procurement information, and have therefore been clustered together. The commitments' text has been abridged. For full text, please see <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/macedonia-national-action-plan-2016-2018>

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	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
5.3. Mandatory Publication of Public Procurement Information				✓	✓						✓		✓					✓			
													✓								
5.6 Introduce Concession Contacts Register			✓		✓						✓					✓			✓		
																✓					

Commitment Aim

This commitment builds on the initiative in Macedonia's second action plan (2014–2016). Commitment 5.3 entailed requiring the publication of (1) annual procurement plans, (2) public procurement calls, (3) notices for concluded contracts, and (4) executed contracts.

The aim of Commitment 5.6 was to introduce a publically-accessible register of concession contracts, including the name of the concessioner, number and date of contract, kind of mineral raw material, municipality carrying out concession activities, and spread of the concession area. The commitment sought to address the lack of public information on concluded contracts and concessions, especially in the field of exploitation of mineral resources in the country.

Status

5.3. Mandatory publication of public procurement information

Midterm: Not Started

Commitment activities had not started by the midterm. According to the Public Procurement Bureau, the new law should have been adopted by the end of 2017; “however, due to political challenges encountered in 2017, development was postponed to October 2018.”¹

End of term: Limited

Expected amendments or the adoption of a new Law on Public Procurements did not happen by September 2018, the end of the implementation period. Publicizing the public-procurement information addressed by Commitment 5.3 was not formally mandatory (annual procurement plans, public-procurement calls, notices for concluded contracts and executed contracts),² and did not start in practice. However, some steps were made in this direction.

Drafting of the Law on Public Procurements began on 31 January 2018, and the process was published on the Single National Electronic Register of Regulations (ENER) by the Ministry of Finance.³ The first draft of the Law was published on 6 February 2018,⁴ and an amended version was published on 4 May 2018.⁵ At the same time, Instructions for Submission of Suggestions on the Second Draft Law on Public Procurements was published.⁶ CSOs were involved in the first draft, however by the time of writing this report, only one of the commitment milestones had been included: the mandatory publication of annual procurement plans.⁷

The Public Procurement Bureau published two recommendations⁸ on their website. The first was to inform public institutions conducting public-procurement procedures of the new functionality to easily link the four pieces of information requested to their locations on the electronic system for public procurement. The second was to publish the links on their respective websites.

5.6. Introduce concession contracts register

Midterm: Complete

This commitment was completely implemented by the midterm. The Ministry of Economy published a table register on contracts and concessions concerning the exploitation of mineral resources. The register includes all the categories of data required by the action plan: the name of the concessioner, number and date of the contract, kind of mineral raw material, municipality carrying out concession activities, and spread of the concession area. The register is available in Excel format and only in Macedonian language.⁹

Did it Open Government?

5.3. Mandatory publication of public procurement information

Access to Information: Did Not Change

The Law on Public Procurements was not adopted during the implementation period. As such, it is still not mandatory for contracting authorities to publish information such as annual procurement plans and public procurement calls. Ultimately, the government has neither disclosed any new information, nor has it improved the quality of information published.

5.6. Introduce concession contracts register

Access to Information: Marginal

At the outset of this action plan, there was lack of public systematized information on contracts and concessions between the state and private companies in the field of exploitation of mineral resources in the country. The Ministry of Economy published an Excel document on its website with the names and contact details of entities that have received concessions.¹⁰ The data is available in open format (Excel) and without restrictions for data manipulation. Publishing accessible and systematized data represents a positive change. However, the Excel document does not list the sums of the concessions or links to the original contracts.

Carried Forward?

Commitment 5.3 was carried over to the next action plan in the third theme, Fiscal Transparency. Commitment 3.2 is titled “Possibility for publishing basic information on public procurements on institutions’ websites (contracting authorities in public procurement).”¹¹ The commitment aims to provide easy-to-understand information about public procurement (about 1 billion euros per year). More specifically, the activities in this commitment include: 1) Increasing the number of institutions using automatic downloading of data from the ESPP (e-procurement system of the Public Procurement Bureau) to publish the annual public-procurement plans; 2) Increasing the number of institutions that use the possibility of automatic download of data from the ESPP to publish the notice for the realized agreement on their websites.¹²

¹ “IRM Macedonia Progress Report 2016-2017”, OGP, IRM, p. 58, 1 July 2018, available at: <https://bit.ly/2nzMA36>.

² German Filkov, Civil Communications Center, interview by IRM researcher, 31 August 2018.

³ https://ener.gov.mk/Default.aspx?item=pub_regulation&subitem=view_reg_detail&itemid=Xp2x6ms4eMDvLz1aB8j7aA. The last draft of the Law on Public Procurements was posted on 28 December 2018.

⁴ “Draft – Law on Public Procurement”, Ministry of Information Society and Administration, available [in Macedonian] at <https://bit.ly/2Vhql5a>.

⁵ “Draft – Law on Public Procurement”, Ministry of Information Society and Administration, available [in Macedonian] at <https://bit.ly/2OwbQ5l>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ German Filkov, *ibid*.

⁸ ‘Integrating ESPP with other institutions’, and ‘Publishing Public procurement contracts’ available at “Home”, ESPP, <https://www.e-nabavki.gov.mk/PublicAccess/Home.aspx#/home>.

⁹ The register is available at “Concessionaires for the exploitation of mineral resources”, Republic of Northern Macedonia Ministry of Economy, 20 August 2018, <http://www.economy.gov.mk/doc/2446>.

¹⁰ Idem.

¹¹ “Open Government National Action Plan 2018-2020”, Open Government Partnership, p. 27, July 2018, available at <https://bit.ly/2InElf0>.

¹² Ibid.

5.4. Involve CSOs when planning IPA 2

Title: Involving representatives of associations and foundations, as well as other civil society organizations, in transparent and objective manner in sector working groups for planning and programming of IPA 2

Though consultations have been organized with civil organization in preparation of certain draft sector plan documents, they do not provide equal participation of the civil sector in all planning and programming phases of the pre-accession support by the EU. For transparent and legitimate involvement of civil society organizations in the work of the sector working groups, the Secretariat for European Affairs announced a call "Open with civil society," for registration of all interested civil society organizations for consultation and participation in working groups for IPA 2. In order to increase accountability and ownership in the programming process, the published list of civil society organizations and the indicative overview are delivered to the sector working groups, stating that the possibility of cooperation with other relevant civil society organizations is open.

- *Created new mechanisms for citizen participation in the management of public resources*
- *Application of knowledge and data available to civil society to better identify the key social challenges and how to deal with them*
- *Enhanced mutual trust between the state and civil society as a result of increased transparency and inclusiveness of the process of programming, and improving the quality of democracy*

(Secretariat for European Affairs; Supporting institution(s): Coordinators of sector working groups in department ministries, interested associations, foundations and their networks. July 2016–June 2018)

5.5. Publish Data on ORIO

Title: Publication of data on signed contracts and received assistance through Infrastructure Development Program (ORIO) Netherlands

There is no publicly available information and data on signed contracts and received assistance through the program ORIO funded by the Netherlands which includes R. Macedonia. In the section intended for ORIO Program on its website, the Secretariat for European Affairs, as the competent institution for promoting the ORIO program in R. Macedonia, will publish a list of public institutions from RM that applied for and received funds from ORIO program; will publish agreements signed between the applicant institutions of RM and the Netherlands; will publish the overall application detailing the objectives and the course of projects funded through this ORIO program; will provide information on the status of the project (development phase, implementation phase and maintenance phase) and will publish data on semi-annual basis for a total received and spent funds during the projected period.

The measure contributes to increasing the transparency and accountability of public institutions in the management of foreign assistance.

(Secretariat for European Affairs; Supporting institution(s): Ministry of Health, Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women (ESE). July 2016–June 2018)

Editorial Note: Commitments 5.4 and 5.5 were clustered since they both support the implementation of ongoing, international projects, and share a responsible implementing institution (the Secretariat for European Affairs). This commitments' text has been abridged. For full text, please see <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/macedonia-national-action-plan-2016-2018>

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	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
5.4. Involve CSOs when planning IPA 2		✓				✓				✓				✓					✓		
5.5. Publish Data on ORIO				✓	✓						✓		✓	✓				✓			

Commitment Aim

Commitment 5.4 aimed to improve the equal participation of civil society organizations when planning and implementing the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance 2 (IPA 2), which is the funding mechanism by which the European Union (EU) supports Macedonia's accession process to the EU.¹ The commitment contains the following three activities: establish a transparent process for involving representatives of associations and foundations in sector working groups; present a framework for coordination of IPA 2; and include CSO representatives in the sector working groups.²

The facility for Infrastructure Development (ORIO) is funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs to encourage public infrastructure development in developing countries, but there was no available information on signed contracts and received assistance through the ORIO program.³ The objective of the Commitment 5.5 was to improve the transparency and accountability of public institutions that manage funds and contracts received from foreign assistance. This commitment entailed publication of the following: a list of public institutions in Macedonia that applied for and received funds from the ORIO program, contracts signed between applicant institutions of the country and the Netherlands, and status information of the project.

Status

5.4. Involve CSOs when planning IPA 2

Midterm: Limited

The commitment saw limited completion by the midterm. Of the three commitment activities, only the second, presenting a framework for coordination of IPA 2, was completed. Preliminary meetings with state secretaries within the Secretariat for European Affairs (SEA) were held, and draft rules outlining the procedure for setting up sectoral working groups were submitted and were pending approval. However, the process of forming sectoral groups had failed "due to the imbalance of representation of state institutions and CSOs."⁴ Additionally, the SEA had withdrawn from the process because they did not consider themselves to be the appropriate institution for managing it.⁵

End of term: Substantial

In regard to the first commitment activity, working groups were set up for IPA 2 planning and programming, although they showed unequal representation of CSOs. As a matter of fact, the ministries used different methods to invite and include CSO representatives in the sectoral groups.⁶ Some ministries included CSO representatives by name and surname determined by the Decision, while other ministries and SEA kept a more open approach, stating only the name of the organization without specifying the person that would represent it at the meetings in order to allow flexibility.⁷ Interviewed CSO representatives expressed a low satisfaction from the manner in which public authorities involved CSOs. Besides the heterogeneous approach, authorities did not publicize the composition of the working groups to a satisfactory degree, nor did they delegate that task to a CSO. The process of 'input collection' was also heterogeneous. The working group for justice was

more systematic and responsive to inputs, while public administration reform was less so, as they did not officially collect inputs. Internal affairs did not accept inputs provided by the association Zenith.⁸

The third commitment activity was substantially completed, as nine sectoral groups were established by the end of term. Ministries leading sectoral groups were given instruction by SEA (prior to its withdrawal) to include CSOs.⁹ Each group included representatives from donors and CSOs to ease the process of IPA programming and other aspects of implementation. From September 2017 to August 2018, the sectoral groups convened twice to participate in programming of IPA 2019 funds, summing 50 million euros in three sectors: 1) sector competition and innovation, 2) sector agriculture and rural development, food, veterinary medicine and phytosanitary protection, and 3) sector education, employment, and social policies. The first meeting involved presenting initial ideas for the programming of IPA 2019 funds, and the second meeting was about accepted projects that would be financed through IPA 2019. The sectoral working groups were chaired by sectoral ministers.¹⁰

Technical meetings between heads of ministerial technical sectors and donors, as well as bilateral meetings between representatives from ministries and the EU delegation also took place in this period. The remaining six sectoral working groups, which did not program IPA 2019 funding, each met once on various topics.¹¹

5.5. Publish data on ORIO

Midterm: Not Started

The commitment had not started by the mid-term reporting period.¹²

End of term: Limited

In December 2017, the government transferred the responsibility of implementing this commitment from SEA to Ministry of Health (MoH). The government also tasked MoH to publish the responses to information requests (mostly submitted by ESE) related to the ORIO project.¹³

By September 2018, all communication between MoH and the Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women (ESE) related to the ORIO project were published on MoH website via two links, 'Dopisi1'¹⁴ and 'Dopisi2.'¹⁵ The two links provide access to a plethora of scanned documents, including freedom of information requests and responses by MoH. The structure of the files with correspondence makes reviewing them a difficult task, since the scans are pictures and not searchable texts. While this does provide some information related to the ORIO project, this commitment did not end up publishing full information about the recipients of ORIO funds, the corresponding projects, and funds received and spent. Therefore, completion is limited. The structure of the files with correspondence makes reviewing them a difficult task. since the scans are pictures and not searchable texts.

Did it Open Government?

5.4. Involve CSOs when planning IPA 2

Civic Participation: Marginal

Inclusion of CSO representatives in IPA programming goes beyond IPA itself. At the time of writing the report, CSO representatives were involved in preparation of strategic documents and action plans on most government policies. The process stalled by late 2017, mostly due to political circumstances. By August 2018, right after the end of the implementation period of the action plan, CSOs were involved in the process of IPA programming for the three sectors included by IPA 2019. In sum, compared to the past, this commitment brought a marginal improvement in participation of CSOs in IPA programming.

5.5. Publish data on ORIO

Access to Information: Did not Change

This commitment aimed to provide a full list of public institutions from the country that applied for and received funds from the ORIO program, agreements signed between the applicant institutions of

Macedonia and the Netherlands, the objectives and course of projects funded, information on the status of the project (development phase, implementation phase and maintenance phase), and data on semiannual basis for the total received and spent funds during the projected period.

Although there was a delay, and despite a lack of internal coordination between administrative bodies, MoH published its responses to access to information requests related to the ORIO project. However, what is available is scanned documents that are hard to review and are not structured in a usable way. The commitment did not deliver on the promise of publishing full information about the project; therefore, there has been no change in terms of improving access to information.

Carried Forward?

Commitment 5.4 was not carried forward to the next action plan.¹⁶ According to SEA, programming IPA funding requires an inclusive and sectoral approach. Beyond the OGP process, CSO inclusion is a continuous process and is mandatory as an EU requirement for state bodies.¹⁷

Commitment 5.5 was also not carried forward to the next action plan,¹⁸ since according to MoH, it was completed¹⁹ by the mid-term. Besides, ORIO is no longer an active program.²⁰

¹ The Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) is the means by which the EU supports reforms in the 'enlargement countries' with financial and technical help. See "Overview – Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance", European Neighbourhood Policy And Enlargement Negotiations, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/instruments/overview_en.

² "IRM Macedonia Progress Report 2016-2017", OGP, IRM, p. 60, 1 July 2018, available at: <https://bit.ly/2nzMA36>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Aleksandar Nikolov, ZENITH, interview by IRM researcher, 22 August 2017.

⁵ IRM Macedonia Progress Report 2016-2017, p.60, *ibid*.

⁶ SEA coordinated the process, but each sectoral ministry was in charge of the groups.

⁷ Evgenija Kirkovski, Secretariat for European Affairs, interview by IRM researcher, 30 August 2018.

⁸ "Home", ZENITH, <https://www.zenith.org.mk/>; Aleksandar Nikolov, ZENITH, e-mail correspondence from the IRM team, 13 April 2019.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ As proof that part of the meetings took place, Evgenija Kirkovski from SEA submitted 12 emails to the IRM team Macedonia, containing: invitations, agendas, working materials and powerpoint presentations from working group meetings.

¹² "IRM Macedonia Progress Report 2016-2017", OGP, IRM, p. 61, 1 July 2018, available at: <https://bit.ly/2nzMA36>. According to the government self-assessment, the project was terminated, though it was unclear on what grounds.

¹³ Biljana Babushkova, Head of Internal Audit Unit, Ministry of Health, interview by IRM researcher, 13 September 2018.

¹⁴ "Dopisi1", Ministry of Health, <https://bit.ly/35aSY2f>.

¹⁵ "Dopisi2", Ministry of Health, <https://bit.ly/2oIG00T>.

¹⁶ "Open Government National Action Plan 2018-2020", Open Government Partnership, July 2018, available at <https://bit.ly/2InElf0>.

¹⁷ Evgenija Kirkovski, *ibid*.

¹⁸ "Open Government National Action Plan 2018-2020", *ibid*.

¹⁹ Biljana Babushkova, *ibid*.

²⁰ "Open Government National Action Plan 2018-2020", *ibid*.

5.8. Publish data on financial assistance for rural development

Title: Publication of data on planned and realized domestic and foreign assistance for rural development and agriculture on a quarterly basis

Nonexistence of concrete information on the amount of funds and measure of the Program for financial support of agriculture in a certain year, paid according the Program, or have been paid according to programs from previous years. Often amendments and supplements to the Program, (sometimes even a day after its adoption), make confusion in respect of data availability and reduced transparency and accountability of the public funds flow. Increased transparency in public finances management, through: - Publication of the provided state and foreign assistance according to a ground/measure, by location, amount of state of foreign assistance and according to a Program for financial support - Information available to the citizens on the data accessibility

(Agency of financial support for agriculture and rural development, Ministry of Health; Supporting institution(s): Center of Economic Analysis. August 2016–Present)

Editorial Note: This commitment text has been abridged. For full text, please see <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/macedonia-national-action-plan-2016-2018>

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm		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	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
5.8 Publish Data on Financial Assistance for Rural Development				✓	✓						✓		✓					✓			
													✓								

Commitment Aim

This commitment aimed to improve the information published by the Agency for Financial Support of Agriculture and Rural Development (AFSARD) on its website. In particular, it addressed a demand expressed by CSOs to improve the format and structure of data on assistance for rural development and agriculture. It envisaged to do so through the publication of quarterly data on the amount of provided state and foreign assistance in agriculture (by program, ground and measure, and location).

Status

Midterm: Not Started

By the midterm this commitment had not started, as informed by AFSARD and partner CSOs (specifically the Center for Economic Analysis [CEA]).

End of Term: Not Started

By the end of the reporting period, no activities had been undertaken. Besides the fact that the working group in charge of the commitment had no meetings,¹ there is no progress indicating that efforts have been made to implement the commitment.² The data on financial assistance for rural development is not published in the format required by the commitment.³ The data on financial assistance is being published on the site of the AFSARD.⁴ According to CSOs involved, data should

be published quarterly, not annually, and furthermore data should be broken down on additional grounds aside from the description of the measure, the name and last name of the beneficiary, and the amount given.

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Did Not Change

Since no activities were undertaken in the commitment, it did not change current government practices around access to information.

Carried Forward?

Commitment 5.8 was not carried forward in the next action plan.⁵ According to the CSOs, interest in this commitment was lost due to the inactivity on implementation.⁶ However, the IRM team recommends that AFSARD improve its IT capacity, its communication with CSOs, and sets a realistic format and structure of the data release by all stakeholders.

¹ Gabriela Dimovska, Center for Economic Analysis – Skopje, interview by IRM researcher, 21 August 2018.

² Ibid.

³ IRM team – Macedonia asked for confirmation of the information on the status of the commitment from the Agency for financial support of agriculture and rural development (AFSARD) but the institution was irresponsive. However, besides members of CSOs, the “not started” status was confirmed by the national focal point for OGP; Ms. Gordana Dimitrovska, interview by IRM researcher, 23 August 2018.

⁴ Agency for Financial Support of Agriculture and Rural Development,
http://www.ipardpa.gov.mk/Root/mak/default_mak.asp.

⁵ <http://www.mio.gov.mk/?q=mk/documents/open-government-partnership> (accessed 4 September 2018).

⁶ Gabriela Dimovska, *ibid*.

6. Theme Openness on Local Level

6.1. Develop transparency and open data standards

Title: Developing standards for transparency and open data on local level

Due to nonexistence of transparency standards at the local level, the municipalities' websites differ in the structure and published data. Also, there is no implementation of the Law on Open Data at the local level, though it also applies to the local self-government units. These circumstances do not provide adequate access to data of citizens' interest. Also, there is neither predictability in searching data, nor they can be compared or processed.

Establishing standards for transparency and open data that will be beneficial for citizens as well as accepted and applied by all local government units. Data and data sets arising from municipal responsibilities and which should be published on the web sites of all municipalities as well as in open data format will be identified by analyzing the legal framework and consultation with Civil society organizations and municipalities. Training of Civil society organizations for open data use as well as creating network among CSOs, local and central government, in order to ensure applicability and sustainability.

(Ministry of Local Self-Government; Supporting institution(s): Ministry of Information Society and Administration, Local government units (Skopje, Kumanovo, Veles, Stip, Strumica, Tetovo, Bitola, Struga), Change Management Center, CSOs at local and regional level. July 2016–June 2017)

Editorial Note: This commitment text has been abridged. For full text, please see <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/macedonia-national-action-plan-2016-2018>

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	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
6.1 Develop Transparency and Open Data Standards			✓		✓						✓					✓		✓			
																✓					

Commitment Aim

Macedonia has been scoring low on a variety of open data indices.¹ Moreover, there were no transparency and open data standards at the local level, which led to the publication of data by local self-government units (LSUs) done in a variety of formats. Commitment 6.1 aimed to address this lack of transparency by implementing the following activities:

- Analysis of the legal framework that identifies the obligations of LSUs to publish information;
- Establishing a network between civil organizations, local government, and central government for the purpose of applying the standards and sustainability of their implementation;
- Elaboration of standards and protocols for transparency and open data at a local level;
- Strengthening capacities for using open data at a local level.

Status

Midterm: Complete

The commitment was fully completed by the midterm. The Center for Change Management and the Ministry of Local Self-Government carried out the analysis of the legal framework regarding the competences of LSUs.² Two additional and related analyses had been undertaken, a comparison on best open-data practices³ and a representative survey on open-data information that citizens would perceive as vital.⁴ With the aim of establishing networks between civil organizations and central and local governments, two platforms had been created: one for OGP organizations and another one at the local level. The standards and protocols for transparency and open data at a local level were ready as well. Three workshops were held for CSOs and LSU administrations on open data. Eight additional workshops in eight planning regions were held in late 2016 and early 2017.⁵

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Did not change

Prior to this commitment, since standards were not properly set, LSUs published open data in different formats. Although all four commitment activities were completed by the midterm, they focused mostly on preparatory steps for utilization of open data, such as elaborating transparency standards for the local level and strengthening capacities. As such, the commitment did not directly contribute to disclosing more data to the public, but it set the foundation for further steps in this direction. Ministry for Information Society and Administration (MISA) officials confirmed that LSUs were prepared to introduce open-data standards on the local level, but “some LSUs”⁶ lacked resources for it. Overall, the commitment has not led to any changes in access to information.

Carried Forward?

Commitment 6.I was not carried forward to the next action plan, since it was fully completed.

¹ 2016 Open Data Barometer:

https://opendatabarometer.org/4thedition/detailcountry/?_year=2016&indicator=ODB&detail=MKD; “Macedonia, FYR”, Open Data Inventory 2016, <https://bit.ly/3394FVc>; and “Macedonia”, Global Open Data Index, <https://index.okfn.org/place/mk/>.

² Eli Cakar, Ministry of Local Self-Government, interview by IRM researcher, 23 August 2017.

³ “The comparative analysis on open data practices”, Center for Change Management, available [in Macedonian] at http://cup.org.mk/publications/CUP_Komparativna_analiza_MK_WEB.pdf.

⁴ The survey on open data information that citizens would perceive as vital: “E-transparency”, Center for Change Management, available [in Macedonian] at http://cup.org.mk/publications/CUP_Istrazivanje.pdf.

⁵ For more information, please see “IRM Macedonia Progress Report 2016-2017”, OGP, IRM, 1 July 2018, available at: <https://bit.ly/2nzMA36>.

⁶ Eli Cakar, *ibid*.

6.2. Improve financial transparency of LSUs

Title: Establishment of new tools to improve financial transparency and accountability of Local self-government units

There is a need to ensure institutional and easier access to information regarding local government operation, emphasizing the implementation of public finance. Establishing control boards in municipalities as a very accessible way of informing the council members and citizens on key financial data from the operation of municipal and public services, through automatic assuming quarter reports on the budget realization, prepared by the municipal administration and their accessibility to the council members and the public using the control boards.

Easier access to information encourages participation among citizens and increases confidence. The purpose of information for the council members, as elected representatives by the citizens allows strengthening the control over the implementation of local public finances by the municipal councils, and thus transparency, accountability and responsibility in spending public money.

(Ministry of Local-Self Government; Supporting institution(s): Ministry of Finance, Local self-government units, UNDP, Association of Local Self-government Units (ALSU). July 2016–December 2017)

Editorial Note: This commitment text has been abridged. For full text, please see <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/macedonia-national-action-plan-2016-2018>

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	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
6.2 Improve Financial Transparency of LSUs		✓			✓					✓					✓						
															✓				✓		

Commitment Aim

Ensuring transparency of public finances on the local level has been a challenge for Macedonian local self-government units (LSUs). For this reason, Commitment 6.2 aimed to introduce innovative approaches and tools for citizens to more easily access and process data on LSUs' financial management. It aimed to do this by identifying important financial indicators to be published and establishing functional tools for accessing and downloading financial data. The commitment also targeted council members of LSUs, with the objective of having better-informed and proactive council members regarding LSUs' financial aspects.

More specifically, the commitment set out to:

- Identify the most important indicators (regarding financial accountability and transparency) to be made publically available;
- Establish control dashboards (i.e. a software solution) and a mobile application to communicate financial data to citizens;
- Implement the control dashboards on the municipalities' websites and the mobile application;
- Implement an additional tool (in six municipalities) to introduce innovations in management.¹

Status

Midterm: Substantial

This commitment was substantially implemented by the midterm. 20 indicators were identified through a deliberative process that included all stakeholders. A software solution for the control dashboards for the municipalities was created, and the mobile application was approved by Google Play and was awaiting approval by the Apple Store. The third and the fourth commitment activities, however, had not been started by the midterm.

End of term: Substantial

There was noticeable progress in the commitment implementation, although it did not reach full completion. Besides the first activity that finished by midterm, the second and third activities were completed within the deadlines set in the 2016–2018 action plan. The software solution for the control dashboards is implemented and completely functional. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the control dashboards have been posted and links to the control boards have been posted on the websites of five out of six planned LSUs (Valandovo, Cair, Sv.Nikole, Ohrid and Veles—Strumica will post very soon).^{2,3} Furthermore, the mobile application is also functional and running on both Google Play and Apple Store.⁴ All required indicators are available to access and download through the control dashboards and the mobile application.

However, the fourth commitment activity was not completed by the end of term. The creation of the additional tool for introducing management innovations is in its inception phase and is delayed. UNDP is granting funds (12 000 CHF per LSU) to all six LSUs for activities that could include anything from software to infrastructural solutions for improvement of the management of the LSU. Additionally, a public call for applications for creative solutions has been opened. Veles has been the most advanced LSU in terms of undertaken activities. Adaptation of the Assembly Hall with innovative technical solutions is underway.

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Major

This commitment aimed to address the lack of transparency surrounding public finances on the local level and the inability to systematically extract and manipulate data on financial management of LSUs.

The commitment activities substantially changed the possibility of council members and the general public to access financial indicators of LSUs. First, identifying indicators represents a major step in defining the scope of the financial data that should be made available to the public. The indicators include total operating income, total operating expenses, total capital income, total capital expenses, revenues per category, expenditures per category, mature liabilities, tranches received, status of the debt in the reporting period, borrowing of municipalities and public enterprises, mature and paid liabilities in the reporting period, etc. According to the UNDP representative, selected LSUs were open and willing to share their financial data.⁵ Second, the creation of online and mobile tools (available for Android and IOS) provides an opportunity to download and manipulate financial data in six municipalities, which sets a precedent for other LSUs to follow. Whereas in the past LSUs disclosed the minimum amount of data regarding financial management, the implementation of this commitment indicates substantial improvement.

Carried Forward?

Commitment 6.2 has been carried forward to the next action plan as part of the fifth theme, which deals with transparency on the local level. The new commitment (5.1) is titled “Establishing of new tools for improvement of financial transparency and accountability of LSUs and social inclusion,” and includes the following commitment activities: set up control boards communicating financial data on LSU websites, implement an additional tool in 24 LSUs, and cooperate with citizens and CSOs when implementing the additional tools.

¹ Though it isn't explicitly stated in the action plan, the additional tool is imagined as a tool for citizens' consultation and a way to more easily access specific services or data.

² Martin Nikolic, UNDP Macedonia, interview by IRM researcher, 23 August 2018. UNDP office backed up the claims with sending concrete functional links to the control boards. Please see "Financial Indicators", UNDP- Empowering Municipal Councils, accessed 6 September 2018, <http://indikatori.opstinskisoveti.mk/>.

³ Accessed 6 September 2018.

⁴ The name of the application is UNDP-EMC dashboard (EMC stands for Empowering Municipal Councils). Please see "UNDP – EMC dashboard", Apple Store, accessed 6 September 2018, <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/undp-emc-dashboard/id1250089236?mt=8>; and "UNDP – EMC dashboard", Google Play, accessed 6 September 2018, <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=io.cordova.myappa84322&hl=en>.

⁵ Martin Nikolic, *ibid*.

6.3. Improve institutional consultation mechanism

Title: Improvement of the institutional consultation mechanism at the local level

Legal regulation provides bodies and mechanisms (equal possibility commissions, commissions for relations of communities, consumer advice councils, local communities) to enable institutional consultation with relevant subjects about matters in the fields of their competence, before issues are included in the Municipality Council agenda and during certain local policy creating. The bodies are mainly set up at the local level, but they function with a limited capacity and results that marginalize their role.

The measures of this commitment contribute for improvement of the representative decision making at the local level through a direct participation and protection of rights of women, specific categories or groups of citizens. Analysis to detect reasons for the existing weaknesses and concrete instruments to be created for strengthened function of these bodies for institutional consultation.

(Ministry of Local Self-Government; Supporting institution(s): Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Local Self-Government Units, Center for Research and Policy Making (CRPM), UN Women, Women's Action. July 2016–July 2018)

6.4. Improve cooperation between LSUs and CSOs

Title: Capacity strengthening for cooperation between the local self-government units and civil organizations

Most of the municipalities still do not have institutional mechanisms and tools for cooperation of the local self-government units (LSU) with civil organizations (COs). The result is insufficiently developed cooperation, particularly in fields of special interest with civil organizations – delivery of services of competence of municipalities by the CO. Transparent cooperation between the LSU and CO is a precondition for better management at the local level.

Establishment of mechanisms and tools creating provide conditions for establishing a practice of institutionalized and predictable cooperation, and increased mutual confidence to encourage participatory and better quality public services. The ambition is to:

- Establish mechanism for granting funds to CSOs
- Strengthen capacities of the local administration and civil organizations for institutional cooperation
- Grant funds to CSOs
- Deliver certain social services of LSU competence to CSOs
- Monitoring of the entire process by the CSOs

(Ministry of Local Self-Government; Supporting institution(s): UNDP, Local self-government units (LSUs). September 2016–December 2017)

Editorial Note: Commitments 6.3 and 6.4 were clustered due to their similar focus on institutional mechanisms for consultation and cooperation at the local level. The commitments' text has been abridged. For full text, please see

<https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/macedonia-national-action-plan-2016-2018>

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	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding

Of the five stated activities, only the first one was fully completed. UNDP and the Ministry of Local Self-Government (MLS) identified 18 municipalities that wished to participate in the commitment and subsequently assessed their existing mechanisms for cooperation. The second activity, the development of a methodology and tools for financing CSOs from municipal budgets and monitoring funds, was in its initial phase. The third, fourth, and fifth commitment activities had not started by the midterm, due to the local elections in October 2017 (delayed from May 2017) that were a prerequisite for activities to commence.

End of term: Substantial

The remaining milestones in the commitment have been completely or partially finished, except the fifth one (which was not started), thus the completion is substantial. Since the midterm, the second commitment activity was fully implemented. MLS⁵ and UNDP⁶ informed the IRM team that the LOAD methodology for financing CSOs and monitoring funds has been adapted from the Bosnia and Herzegovina model to meet local needs.

UNDP partially completed the third commitment activity, which aimed to design adapted grant schemes for each selected municipality. UNDP published an initial call in five municipalities and worked with local CSOs to form committees to evaluate grant schemes.⁷ However, the process was temporarily stopped in order to reevaluate the methodology for selecting grants. In two municipalities (Strumica and Kavadarci), the grants will go forward with their implementation, while UNDP informed the IRM researcher that the Resen municipality did not submit a successful application. In two municipalities, Kumanovo and Gostivar, there will be a new call for applications.⁸

The fourth commitment activity, which intended to develop the capacities of the local administration and CSOs in selected municipalities, is connected with the third activity. The five selected municipalities have undergone a two-day training organized by UNDP. In addition to the training, UNDP also organized an informational session for local CSOs to communicate available projects and requirements for applying for a grant. UNDP informed the IRM team⁹ that more trainings will be held in a form of a coaching for better results.

The fifth commitment activity, ensuring social service delivery by CSOs, was not started within the timeframe of this report. Although the IRM team was informed that two municipalities (Strumica and Kavadarci) were expected to start three projects in October 2018,¹⁰ this falls outside of the implementation period for this action plan.

Did It Open Government?

6.3. Improvement of the institutional consultation mechanism at the local level

Civic Participation: Did not change

This commitment was formulated to improve the functioning of institutional consultations at the local level, but after being implemented, it did not contribute to opening government.

First of all, the Manual for Advancement of Gender Equality and the four programs held by Women's Action represent the first step, or pilot phase, to include issues of gender when LSUs decide and implement their projects. Since only four LSUs were reached, this represents a "pioneer effort"¹¹ to influence public participation on local level related to gender-sensitive aspects. While the trainings have taken place, they have not yet resulted in a visible change in public participation, nor have they substantially changed any local level practices related to gender aspects.

The second milestone, the model for including the gender approach in public involvement of local policy creation, only provided the template for possible further action. CSO activists indicate that the real impact was predominantly related to LSUs becoming more aware and sensitive towards gender-related issues,¹² and that the activities were valuable for considering aspects of gender-sensitive budgeting in LSUs where activities were undertaken.¹³ The model for gender-sensitive budgeting has been prepared solely by CRPM, and as such has not lead to a visible change in practices on local level.

If fully completed, the third milestone could have lead to a change, since it involves CSOs and local authorities (as well as international organizations) in a joint effort, not just to deliberate but also be

actively involved in gender-sensitive issues related to marginalized groups through concrete projects and activities. However, this milestone was postponed until late 2018. For these reasons, the IRM researchers' team considered that Commitment 6.3 did not advance civic participation.

6.4. Capacity strengthening for cooperation between the local self-government units and civil organizations

Access to Information: Marginal

Civic Participation: Marginal

The commitment aimed to establish consultation mechanisms in municipalities across the country, by developing a methodology for financing local CSOs, preparing grant schemes, increasing the capacity of both CSOs and local governments, and ensuring that local CSOs take over social service delivery on local level.

In terms of access to information, this commitment marginally influenced governmental openness. CSOs can now obtain information regarding project objectives and applications.¹⁴ According to UNDP representatives, this commitment serves as “good future practice that raises the expectations of CSOs on local level [on] how the LSUs should engage in granting funds in the future.”¹⁵

There has been a marginal positive change on local level for improving civic participation. CSOs participated in capacity-building trainings that further increase their ability to participate on local level in the future.¹⁶ Commitment 6.4 created opportunities for the CSOs to influence decision making through the joint work between UNDP and local CSOs to form committees and evaluate grant schemes. Additionally, the initial number of municipalities chosen to be the target of the granting schemes was lowered from 18 to five, and trainings have been limited to the CSOs-only in the five selected municipalities.

Carried Forward?

Part of Commitment 6.3 has been carried forward to the next action plan.¹⁷ Although it has been modified substantially, the new commitment is based on the third activity of Commitment 6.3 in the 2016–2018 action plan, that is the selection of local projects to receive funding. The new commitment's title is “Inclusive approach for decision-making for stimulating local and regional development” and outlines the following activities: one, select nongovernmental representatives to act as moderators for the fora, and two, organize four forum sessions in each planning region to identify crucial problems and select projects that should be proposed for financing.

Commitment's 6.4 completion is in its final state. For that reason, the commitment has not been carried forward in the new action plan. However, the IRM team suggests the following steps be undertaken:

- Assess the experiences of Strumica and Kavadarci using the adapted grant schemes, and apply this information to the other municipalities;
- Develop capacity-development models for CSOs and local administration, and implement additional trainings, if required by stakeholders;
- Aid CSOs in social service delivery by stakeholders (UNDP and MLS);
- Increase number of elected municipalities in the following period, given the decrease from the original commitment (18 to five).

¹ Dr. Marija Risteska, Ana Mickovska Raleva MA, Aleksandar ZhEKov MA, and Riste Zmejkoski, “Models for Women Participation in the Decision Making Process on the Local Level”, Center for Research and Policy Making, available [in Macedonian] at <https://bit.ly/2Mqm5pO>.

² Dragica Milosevska, Zenska Akcija, official communication via email, 28 August 2018.

³ Emil Angelov and Biljana Nastovska, UNDP – Macedonia, interview by IRM researcher, 23 August 2018.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Eli Cakar, MLS, interview by IRM researcher, 30 August 2018.

⁶ Emil Angelov, *ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Dragica Milosevksa, *ibid.*

¹² Marija Risteska, Center for Research and Policy Making, interview by IRM researcher, 22 August 2018.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ CSOs can directly address contacts in the LSU or UNDP regarding the grant schemes. The information has not been systematized on a website or platform.

¹⁵ Martin Nikolic, UNDP Macedonia, interview by IRM researcher, 23 August 2018.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ “Open Government National Action Plan 2018-2020”, Open Government Partnership, July 2018, accessed 7 September 2018, available at <https://bit.ly/2InElf0>.

6.5. Evaluate service quality at the local level

Title: Monitoring and evaluation of service quality at the local level

There is still a lack of integrated and standardized measurement system for citizens' satisfaction with services provided by the local self-government units, as well as for monitoring results of service delivery. Activities to be taken within this commitment will allow citizens to set their goals and priorities, and at the same time the civil sector can monitor success of municipalities in public services providing. Providing a functional and standardized measurement system of the "life quality" in all municipalities (focused on local services), quality monitoring in public service delivery, as well as getting continual insight in citizens' satisfaction with the local level services quality.

- *Established functional and standardized life quality measurement system focused on local services in all municipalities in the country;*
- *Created data base on the life quality in all 81 municipalities in the Republic of Macedonia;*
- *Strengthened capacities of the civil sector for monitoring services provided by the local self-government;*
- *Strengthened monitoring role of municipal councils in municipal administration delivering local level services.*
- *Conducted annual researches of the citizens' satisfaction with the local level services quality.*

Establishment of a standardized life quality measurement system in all municipalities will contribute for getting a continual insight in quality of services provided by the local self-government units, and will strengthen monitoring role of municipal councils in municipal administration.

(Ministry of Local Self-Government; Supporting institution(s): LSUs, UNDP, CSOs. September 2016–December 2017)

6.6. Improve local social services

Title: Improvement of the local level social services

Nonexistences of electronic system for communication between pre-school children care institutions (kindergartens) and parents as their services users. The measures of this commitment contribute for improved efficacy, transparency and accountability of the local level institutions in the field of social services. Developed platform and capacity building for communication and improvement of effectiveness and efficacy in service delivery by the kindergartens.

- *Development of a tool (web, mobile and desktop application) containing the following elements:*
- *Electronic network of all cooperative subjects with the kindergarten*
- *Electronic communication and service delivery through electronic form application for enrolling kindergartens, daily menu publication, event organization, possibility for citizens to have a direct impact through their comments, suggestions and proposals on the kindergarten WEB site.*

(Ministry of Local Self-Government; Supporting institution(s): Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, PKG "Astibo" – Shtip, PKG "13 Noemvri" – Municipality of Center, PKG "Detska Radost" – Municipality of Gazi Baba, PKG "Buba Mara" – Municipality of Aerodrom, PKG "8 Mart" – Municipality of Kisela Voda, Center for Research and Policy Making (CRPM), Sole Communication Network-DOOEL. July 2016–June 2018)

6.7. Greater social inclusion of disabled people

Title: Improvement of disabled people social inclusion at the local level

According to the Law on Local Self-government in RM, any municipality is obliged to provide citizens with an access to basic information on services they provide. Disabled people face with different kinds of barriers in their everyday activities: entering and using public facilities, public transportation, service using. The measures of this commitment will improve inclusion of disabled people at the local level as a vulnerable group of people. Easier access for disabled people to information and services delivered by municipalities.

- Modulation of the municipalities' websites in order to provide unhindered access to information for disabled people (defective vision).
- Appointment of a trained person for communication with disabled persons in all municipalities.

(Ministry of Local Self-Government; Supporting institution(s): Ministry of Information Society and Administration, Local self-government units, INKLUZIVA – Association for Inclusive Society Promotion and Development. September 2016–December 2017)

Editorial Note: Commitments 6.5, 6.6, and 6.7 all center on social services and service quality at the local level, and have been clustered together for this reason. The commitments' text has been abridged. For full text, please see <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/macedonia-national-action-plan-2016-2018>

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	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
6.5 Evaluate Service Quality at the Local Level			✓			✓					✓		✓					✓			
6.6 Improve Local Social Services			✓			✓					✓			✓				✓			
6.7 Greater Social Inclusion of Disabled People				✓	✓			✓			✓		✓					✓			

Commitment Aim

Commitments 6.5, 6.6, and 6.7 focused on improving services or evaluating service quality on local level. The Republic of Macedonia lacked an integrated and standardized system for measuring citizens' satisfaction with services provided by the local self-government units (LSUs). Additionally, there was no established system for monitoring service delivery.

Commitment 6.5 aimed to establish a standardized measuring and monitoring system in all 81 LSUs and to allow citizens to influence goal-setting and priorities in LSUs.

Commitment 6.6. aimed to improve local kindergarten services by creating and implementing a web platform for communication between parents and service providers, as well as among kindergartens. The commitment also set out to train and raise awareness of this software among kindergarten staff.

Commitment 6.7 aimed to ensure that LSUs fully comply with their required responsibilities, as outlined in the Law of Local Self-Government, and that they provide access to service information for all citizens, including those with different capacities or various disabilities. To that end, this commitment set out to modify municipalities' websites to better provide access to citizens with

visual impairments and publish a list of persons trained to communicate with disabled persons on each municipal website.

Status

6.5. Monitoring and evaluation of service quality at the local level

Midterm: Not Started

At the midterm, this commitment was not started. All commitment activities were stalled due to the delayed local elections in October 2017, prior to which the mandates of mayors and councils in the LSUs had expired on 22 May (the new government that came into office on 31 May then extended their mandates and on 3 June set 15 October for the new elections). All activities were postponed until after the local elections.

End of term: Limited

At the end of term, the overall completion of this commitment was limited. The first commitment activity is ongoing; according to the Ministry of the Local Self-Government, “an expert is working on [defining] the quality of life indicators,”¹ and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has stated that the activity was planned to be finished by September 2019.² The implementation of the second commitment activity is limited. UNDP has informed the IRM team that LSUs are currently being informed on their obligations, but the government (MLS) has not yet decided how best to strengthen municipalities’ capacities to coordinate, monitor, and evaluate local-service delivery.³ MLS confirmed that this activity is incomplete.⁴ The third and the fourth commitment activities have not started since they are dependent on the previous activities.

As for the last milestones, MLS has informed the IRM team that the two annual studies assessing citizen satisfaction with local-service quality have been completed in 2017 and 2018. The studies were conducted by the MLS until 2018, and UNDP will take over on behalf of the MLS starting from 2019.⁵

6.6. Improve local social services

Midterm: Limited

This commitment’s completion was limited by the midterm. Only the first of four commitment activities were finished, although other the activities were planned for the second year of the implementation period and are on time. One of the stakeholders, SOLE Communication Network, has developed a digital platform and was willing to donate it, as a part of a pilot phase, to interested kindergartens and municipalities.

End of Term: Limited

By the end of term, this commitment’s completion was limited. Besides the development of the digital platform during the first half of the implementation period, no other activities have commenced. CSO representatives confirmed that the funds necessary for the implementation of the second, third, and the fourth activities were not obtained.⁶ Additionally, CSO representatives have informed the IRM team that “stakeholders (kindergartens and municipalities) gradually lost interest [in the commitment] over time.”⁷ MLS confirmed the status of the commitment and has no opposing views with CSOs involved in the activity.⁸

6.7. Improvement of disabled people social inclusion at the local level

Midterm: Not started

The IRM team had been informed that the activities in this commitment had been altered in a report from MLS to the Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA),⁹ to include a needs assessment and the opening of information centers for people with vision-related disabilities. Modifying municipalities’ websites was still a commitment activity, however, the government would no longer publish a list of trained persons to communicate with disabled people. By the midterm, none of the new activities had been started, and the CSOs involved had lost contact with MLS. For more information, please refer to the 2016–2017 IRM midterm report.

End of term: Limited

Stakeholders informed the IRM team that none of the activities have been completed within the commitment.¹⁰ One CSO representative stated that all contact between stakeholders had been lost and that the partner CSO was not informed by MLS that milestones have been changed.¹¹

Contrary to this, MLS informed the IRM team that some of the commitment activities had been finished.¹² According to the MLS, the websites of northwest region municipalities had been adapted to fit the needs of the persons with visual impairment, including Kriva Palanka, Kumanovo, Staro Nagoricane, Lipkovo, Kratovo, and Rankovce.¹³ In practice, however, only one LSU has done this. MLS also informed the IRM team that a guide for visually impaired persons had been published on Kriva Palanka's website. However, the IRM team was unable to find the document on the website and did not receive a functional link from MLS.

Did It Open Government?

6.5. Monitoring and evaluation of service quality at the local level

Civic Participation: Did Not Change

This commitment was meant to create a system for measuring service quality provided by LSUs. Although this commitment aimed to have citizens influence priority setting in LSUs and provide CSOs the opportunity to monitor service delivery, little progress had been made by the end of term. What had been started, identifying quality-of-life indicators, did not lead to introducing the system and improving opportunities for civic participation in any way. UNDP representatives confirmed that no actual change took place as a result of this commitment.¹⁴

6.6. Improve local social services

Civic Participation: Did Not Change

Ultimately, since the web platform was not implemented, it did not create any new opportunities for civic participation. As such, this commitment did not open government.

6.7. Improvement of disabled people social inclusion at the local level

Access to Information: Did Not Change

As a result of this commitment, only one LSU (Kriva Palanka) adapted its website to accommodate to the needs of disabled, while other activities were not carried out.¹⁵ Overall, this commitment did not lead to changes in practices of LSUs for improving civic participation of people with disabilities.

Carried Forward?

Commitment 6.5 has not been carried forward to the next action plan, since the third and fourth commitment activities are still pending. The IRM team recommends that these activities continue as planned. The analysis of life-quality indicators should be finished as soon as possible, while the modality for capacity strengthening of LSUs should be carefully selected based on the needs of all stakeholders.

Commitment 6.6 was not carried forward to the next action plan due to the gradual loss of interest by stakeholders (both SOLE Communications and the Center for Research and Policy Making) and lack of needed funds. None of the stakeholders proposed that the same commitment be continued in the new 2018–2020 action plan.

Commitment 6.7 was not carried forward in the next action plan due to the gradual loss of interest by stakeholders. Since very few activities were undertaken in the commitment, the IRM team proposes the following:

- Increase communication among all stakeholders to define activities that could be carried out outside of the OGP process;
- Locate possible donors for the remaining activities and apply for grants;
- Finish modifying the websites and open the information centers.

-
- ¹ Eli Cakar, Ministry of Local Self-Government, interview by IRM researcher, 30 August 2018.
- ² Emil Angelov, UNDP – Macedonia, interview by IRM researcher, 23 August 2018.
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ Eli Cakar, *ibid.*
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ Sasko Krstevski, SOLE Communication Network, interview by IRM researcher, 27 August 2018.
- ⁷ Aleksandar Cekov, Center for Research and Policy Making, interview by IRM researcher, 22 August 2018.
- ⁸ Eli Cakar, *ibid.*
- ⁹ Eli Cakar, Ministry of Local Self-Government, interview by IRM researcher, 23 August 2017.
- ¹⁰ Blagica Dimitrovska, INKLUZIVA, interview by IRM researcher, 3 October 2018.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Eli Cakar, Ministry of Local Self-Government, interview by IRM researcher, 30 August 2018.
- ¹³ After checking the websites of the LSUs, the only relevant information found by IRM team Macedonia is that municipality of Kriva Palanka has indeed adapted their website. For more please see “Recognition for the website of the Municipality of Kriva Palanka by the Association for promotion and development of inclusive society – INCLUSIVE”, Municipality of Kriva Palanka, 14 September 2018, accessed 4 October 2018, <http://www.krivapalanka.gov.mk/nastani/14336>. Similar information can be found on the web site of the municipality of Kumanovo: “The Council's official website will be accessible to people with disabilities”, Municipality of Kumanovo, 28 November 2017, accessed 4 October 2018, <https://bit.ly/31Yed5v>. However, this announcement regards only the plan to adapt the website, not the adaptation itself.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Blagica Dimitrovska, *ibid.*

6.9. Increase information on the Ombudsman office

Title: More information for the citizens on the Ombudsman institution

The Ombudsman institution was established in 1997, with the adoption of the Law on Ombudsman. However, citizens are not sufficiently familiar with its competences and role in their rights protection, particularly in smaller and rural municipalities. Each municipality should post on its website clearly visible link to the Ombudsman's website. Posting of the link to the Ombudsman will increase the level of information on the Ombudsman institution existence, as well as the citizens' awareness of the possibility for their rights protection in front of the central and local government bodies.

(Ministry of Local Self-Government; Supporting institution(s): Ombudsman, CO for citizens' rights protection. July 2016–July 2017)

Editorial Note: This commitment text has been abridged. For full text, please see <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/macedonia-national-action-plan-2016-2018>

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm		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	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
6.9 Increase Information on the Ombudsman Office			✓		✓					✓				✓				✓			
														✓							

Commitment Aim

The introduction of the Ombudsman office in the Republic of Macedonia in 1997 did not automatically create public visibility of the institution. Moreover, citizens are often confused and unaware of their rights and how these rights are related to the Ombudsman office. In order to increase information on the Ombudsman office, this commitment required that each of the 80 municipalities in the Republic of Macedonia (plus the city of Skopje as a separate entity) post a link to the Ombudsman website on their respective websites.

Status

Midterm: Limited

By the midterm evaluation, this commitment had limited completion. Out of 80 municipalities (plus the City of Skopje), 35 municipalities had not posted the URL link to the Ombudsman's office on their website.¹

End of term: Limited

Based on an updated list of municipalities,² the IRM team checked their respective websites.³ Two municipalities do not have a website at all (Lipkovo and Staro Nagoricane), two municipalities have dysfunctional websites (Brvenica and Cair), and an additional 28 municipalities have not posted the URL to the Ombudsman office on the home page of their respective websites.⁴ In sum, 32 municipalities have still not posted the URL to the Ombudsman's office (for various reasons). Since the midterm, only three more municipalities (Mogila, Radovis, and Shuto Orizari) posted the URL. As such, completion remains limited.

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Did not change

In order to increase the visibility of the Ombudsman office, this commitment intended for local self-government units (LSUs) to post a direct link to the Ombudsman's website on their respective websites. As a result of commitment activities, 49 LSUs (including the City of Skopje) have posted the URL on their home pages, and 32 LSUs have not. However, although the number of citizens accessing the Ombudsman office's website may have increased,⁵ this commitment did not change the government practice regarding access to information.

Carried Forward?

Commitment 6.9 was not carried over to the next action plan. Nevertheless, the researchers recommend that the remaining LSUs post a link to the Ombudsman office's website.

¹ According to information provided by the Ombudsman office of RM on 30 November 2017 to the IRM Macedonia team, the following municipalities have not posted the link: Aracinovo, Bogovinje, Brvenica, Vevcani, Gazi Baba, Debarca, Demir Kapija, Demir Hisar, Dojran, Dolneni, Gjorce Petrov, Zelenikovo, Ilinden, Jegunovce, Karpos, Konce, Lipkovo, Lozovo, Mogila, Petrovec, Plasnica, Prilep, Radovis, Rankovce, Rosoman, Saraj, Sopiste, Staro Nagoricane, Studenici, Tetovo, Centar, Centar Zupa, Chair, Cucer Sandevo, and Suto Orizari.

² Ketj Stefkova, Ombudsman office of the Republic of Macedonia, interview with IRM researcher, 16 August 2018. Official email with updated list on 20 August 2018.

³ List checked by IRM team – Macedonia on 5 September 2018 (9:30 AM).

⁴ These municipalities include: Aracinovo, Bogovinje, Vevcani, Gazi Baba, Debarca, Demir Kapija, Demir Hisar, Dojran, Dolneni, Gjorce Petrov, Zelenikovo, Ilinden, Jegunovce, Karpos, Konce, Lozovo, Petrovec, Plasnica, Prilep, Rankovce, Rosoman, Saraj, Sopiste, Studenici, Tetovo, Centar, Centar Zhupa and Cucer Sandevo.

⁵ IRM team Macedonia asked the Ombudsman office to send data on website visits and complaints submitted electronically in the period 2016–2018. Although strong correlation cannot be made, if there is increase in both parameters, this might indirectly indicate that the commitment has given effect. However, the required indicators were not sent to the IRM.

7. Public Services

7.1. Favourable legal environment for social contracts

Improve social services to citizens in Macedonia pursuant to their needs by creating a favorable legal environment for social contracts, and improvement of national legislation and policies by developing mechanisms for social contracts in the field of social protection in the country. Further objective of this measure is to help create an appropriate environment for social entrepreneurship in civil society organizations (CSOs) and to improve their sustainability, financial viability and social impact.

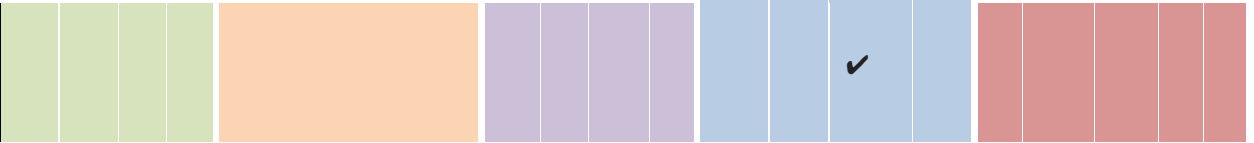
- Elaborated document (action plan) with procedures for effective implementation of social contracts for the upcoming 3 years;
- Proposals to improve the legal framework for social protection in the country, in accordance with relevant international standards and regulations, which allows the conclusion of social contracts in the field of social protection;
- Preparation of draft bylaws on standards for social services, the proposed procedures for the regulation of social contracts in the field of social protection, as well as establishing conditions and procedure for selection of other social services providers.
- Promotion of social contract as a model for improving the social services quality and sustainability of civil society in Macedonia and strengthening intersectorial collaboration.
- Strengthened capacities of 100 CSO representatives, central and local government, institutions and businesses by training for successful implementation of the model of social contracts in the field of social protection.
- Establishing business activities and strengthen the social impact of 10 CSOs by re-grant of creative solutions to solve social problems
- Improved environment for social entrepreneurship

(Ministry of Labor and Social Policy; Supporting institution(s): Ministry of Local Self-Government, Local self-government units, SOS Children's Village, Center for Research and Policy Making (CRPM). July 2016–June 2017)

Editorial Note: This commitment text has been abridged. For full text, please see <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/macedonia-national-action-plan-2016-2018>

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	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
		↙			Unclear					↙					↙				↙		

7.1 Favorable Legal Environment for Social Contracts



Commitment Aim

In the Republic of Macedonia, almost all social services are provided by the central-government level. Commitment 7.1 aimed to improve social service delivery by creating a favorable environment for social entrepreneurship in civil society organizations (CSOs). This commitment aimed to achieve this objective through drafting standards for social services delivery by CSOs, developing a model for social agreements, creating a proposal for improving the selection process, granting permission for social services delivery to CSOs, and coming up with financial mechanisms for providing grants to 10 CSOs.

Status

Midterm: Substantial

Overall, the commitment was substantially completed by the CSOs involved, primarily led by SOS Children's Village 'Detsko Selo' and the Center for Research and Policy Making (CRPM). With regard to the second and fourth commitment activities, CSOs introduced a model for social contracts on 28 July 2017, developed a capacity-building program for social entrepreneurship involving 30 organizations, awarded 10 start-up grants to NGOs for social business, and developed an 18-month mentoring program for new start-up social enterprises.

However, it was unclear if the responsibility for this commitment was shared between local self-government units and CSOs.¹

End of term: Substantial

According to the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, this commitment has been fully implemented. A new Law on Social Protection was being prepared at the time of writing, and the Law is expected to contain provisions that would further develop activities one, two, and three (already implemented by midterm by the organization SOS Children's Village).² Besides, a representative from SOS Children's Village has a permanent cabinet within the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

CRPM carried out developing financial mechanisms for granting start-up grants for 10 NGOs for business ideas and promotion of social entrepreneurship.³ CRPM has informed the IRM team that the 10 NGOs that were awarded grants have developed business plans and are showing results, some of which include: street distribution of the magazine 'lice v lice' and the first bicycle center 'prv velo centar'.⁴ CRPM also held three formal and two informal working meetings with representatives from the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, regarding suggestions for the draft Law on Social Entrepreneurship.⁵

Did It Open Government?

Civic Participation: Marginal

By creating a model for social contracts in the field of child protection and social services, this commitment intended to address social problems through creative solutions delivered by nonprofit organizations.

This commitment was mainly implemented by the involved nongovernmental organizations, namely SOS Children's Village and CRPM. They took the leading role in delivering key results of this commitment, such as introducing a model for social contracts, developing a capacity-building program for social entrepreneurship, and awarding grants to NGOs. Therefore, it is not clear to what extent these results are owned by the government, namely the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MTSP) and how it has changed the government practice related to civic participation. Nevertheless, during the implementation of this commitment, two CSOs were in continuous communication and exchange of information with the ministry, via formal working meetings, informal visits, e-mail, and phone conversations when needed.⁶ CRPM suggestions were also taken up by the Ministry of Labor and

Social Policy during the drafting of the Law on Social Entrepreneurship, which represents a marginal change for civic participation.

Carried Forward?

The commitment was not carried over to the next action plan.⁷ According to officials from MTSP, the aims of this commitment were incorporated into the new Law on Social Policy and Law on Social Entrepreneurship.⁸

¹ Ibid.

² Sofija Spasovska, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, interview by IRM researcher, 12 September 2018.

³ Ibid. Also Zlatko Simonovski, Center for Research and Policy Making, interview by IRM researcher, 22 August 2018.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Sofija Spasovska, *ibid*; Zlatko Simonovski, *ibid*.

⁷ “Open Government National Action Plan 2018-2020”, Open Government Partnership, July 2018, available at <https://bit.ly/2InElf0>.

⁸ Sofija Spasovska, *ibid*.

8. Climate Changes

8.1. Develop climate policies in a participatory manner

Title: Developing climate policies at national level in a transparent and participatory manner

Although existing national plans and other national reports on climate change were made in a transparent and participatory manner, there is a need for additional efforts present this issue to wider groups in order to achieve a higher degree of sense of mutual ownership over the results. The measures of this commitment contribute to harmonization of national policies with climate change measures and better decisionmaking by policy makers based on consultation with stakeholders. Transparent and participatory development of climate policy at national level. Greater transparency in the process shall enable more informed decision making process on sectorial and local policies.

- *Will provide a better environment for climate policy development; - Will strengthen existing and create new cooperation mechanisms;*
- *Will ensure availability and possibility of involvement of all relevant parties in the preparation of national documents on climate change to international bodies in order to cover state's obligations to UNFCCC and EU.*

(Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning; Supporting institution(s): National Committee on Climate Change, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Ministry of Finance, Secretariat of European Affairs, Government of Macedonia - Sector for Economic Policies, Structural Reforms and Investments, Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Chamber of Commerce, NGOs / CSOs, Donors / projects implemented in the area of climate change. July 2016–January 2018)

8.2. Open data on climate change

Title: Open data on climate change at national and local level

Data on climate change should be available in one place, be in a form that is understandable to general public and will enable greater citizen participation in policy making as well as open up opportunities for transfer and application of new technologies and innovations. This measure will contribute to constant upgrade of this data, as well as understanding and easily accessibility in one place - portal www.klimatskipromeni.mk. More transparent and participatory development of climate policy at national level.

- *will provide improved systems for collecting relevant data;*
- *Will improve quality of the collection and analysis of data;*
- *Will strengthen national capacity to address climate change;*
- *Will improve the quality of reporting to the UNFCCC and the EU*

(Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning; Supporting institution(s): National Hydro meteorological Service, National Committee on Climate Change, State Statistical Office, Administration HMS, Local Self-Government, Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Academic community. July 2016–January 2018)

8.3. Improve reporting on environment pollution

Title: Ensuring private sector accountability and involvement in national climate change action

Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning collects information from industry in writing through several types of questionnaires regarding different segments related to environmental pollution. This measure will connect all information the Ministry requires from the industry in electronic form; it will facilitate reporting and improve quality of collected data related to air pollution and climate change.

- *Will improve reporting, monitoring and verification of data which the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning requires from industry*

- Will strengthen cooperation with private sector
- Will provide support for reporting to UNFCCC and EU

(Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning; Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts, National Committee on Climate Change, Government of RM, Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Chamber of Commerce, NGOs / CSOs, Donors / projects implemented in the area of climate change. July 2016–January 2018)

Editorial Note: This commitment text has been abridged. For full text, please see <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/macedonia-national-action-plan-2016-2018>

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	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
8.1 Develop Climate Policies in a Participatory Manner			✓			✓				✓					✓				✓		
8.2 Open Data on Climate Change			✓		✓					✓					✓				✓		
8.3 Improve Reporting on Environmental Pollution		✓			✓					✓						✓		✓			

Commitment Aim

In recent years, climate change has received greater attention in national policy due to the country's candidate status for accession to the European Union and its participation in international agreements. This cluster of commitments sought to address three issues: 1) the need for participatory climate change policy development, 2) the need for improved open data on climate change, and 3) the need to ensure public sector accountability within environmental activities.

Commitment 8.1 aimed to organize three consultative workshops with stakeholders in preparation of the Second Bi-Annual Report on Climate Change, which is part of Macedonia's commitments to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and to prepare information materials on the Paris Agreement.¹

Commitment 8.2 aimed to revise the national inventory of greenhouse gas (GHG) with data from 2013 and 2014, improve the quality of and provide free access to the national inventory, and strengthen the capacity of relevant parties to ensure regular collection of data.²

Commitment 8.3 aimed to improve the reporting, monitoring, and verification of data the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MEPP) collects from the private sector by creating guidelines for the updated Emission Monitoring from Industry (EMI) software. The new software is expected to centralize the reporting system by requiring one single format the industry needs to follow.³

Status

8.1. Develop climate policies in a participatory manner

Midterm: Substantial

This commitment was substantially completed as of July 2017. As for the first commitment activity, MEPP held two consultative workshops during the period from February to April 2017: “Finalization of the Greenhouse Gases Inventory” and “Assessment of the Potentials for Climate Change Migration.”

The second commitment activity was fully implemented by the midterm. The MEPP and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) implemented a series of activities (within the framework of the project, “Second National Communication on Climate Change”) related to the preparation of innovative materials for the state’s commitment regarding climate change. These promotional materials are available on the websites, www.klimatskipromeni.mk and <http://klimatskipromeni.mk/article/28#/index/main>, and they include a detailed report on Macedonia’s climate commitments following the Paris Agreement.⁴

End of term: Complete

This commitment was fully completed by the end of term.⁵ The third and final consultation workshop was held on 21 September 2017 in the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts.⁶ This workshop presented the appropriate mechanisms to monitor, report, and verify climate change analysis, as well as the financial and technical challenges within the Second Biennial Update Report on Climate Change. The Second Biennial Update Report on Climate change (part of Macedonia’s commitments to UNFCCC) was published in October 2017 and is available online.⁷

8.2. Open data on climate change

Midterm: Substantial

The commitment was substantially completed by midterm. The Macedonian Academy of Science and Arts revised the national inventory of greenhouse gas emissions and improved the quality of inventory data, in coordination with MEPP and UNDP. The national inventory of greenhouse gases can be freely accessed through the government’s website on climate change⁸ and the UNFCCC webpage.⁹ The datasets can be searched for gas, sector, subsector, or year, and the information is visible in dynamic charts. They can also be exported to Excel or photo and printed.¹⁰ The City of Skopje and eight municipalities in Macedonia provided free access to the GHG inventory via the national government website and the City of Skopje website.¹¹

The fourth commitment activity aimed to strengthen the capacity of relevant parties to ensure the regular collection and sharing of climate change data. To that end, UNDP trained two staff members in inventory preparation and MEPP supported the training of two more staff members. In order to provide a detailed GHG inventory in agriculture, forestry, and land expropriation sectors, the “Corine database” was used for the first time, which provides accurate data compilation, information consistency, and data compatibility. It is not clear which institutions took part in the training, nor what the training agenda was. As stated in the progress report, commitment activity 8.2.4 could not be considered completed by midterm.¹²

End of term: Substantial

Activity four was not completed by the end of term and thus the completion level remained substantial.

8.3. Improve reporting on environmental pollution

Midterm: Complete

This commitment only listed one activity: prepare guidelines for the emissions-monitoring software, a necessary first step to upgrade the preexisting software.¹³ The guidelines were completed and submitted to the government for adoption in July 2017.¹⁴ The guidelines represent part of secondary legislation to provide clear mandates to the private sector on how their reporting should be done.

Did It Open Government?

8.1. Developing climate policies at national level in a transparent and participatory manner

Civic Participation: Marginal

This commitment strived to improve civic participation in the process of planning and developing policies on climate change, through participatory elaboration on the Second Biennial Update (audited) report on climate change, with all relevant parties at working groups, public debates and other forms of consultations.¹⁵

According to mid-term results and Pavlina Zdraveva from UNDP—who was directly involved in the implementation of commitment activities—the participatory character was commendable, including close to 100 representatives from government institutions, international organizations, academia, business sector, and CSOs,¹⁶ attending each of the consultative workshops (more than the three set by national action plan 2016-2018). The workshops acted as a corrective mechanism to existing policies and a mechanism for the preparation of the Second Biennial Update on climate change in clear and understandable wording for all concerned parties. Recognizing that climate change was not differentiated from environment (to the broader public), and in greater part, reports on climate change are dominated by ‘technical jargon,’ this activity contributed to a more understandable, climate-change-specific policy—only expressed via the Biennial Update. As a result of continued participatory character of policy making process, the IRM team considers the contribution of this commitment to the value of civic participation as marginal compared to previous practices.

8.2. Open data on climate change at national and local level

Access to Information: Marginal

This commitment meant to provide open access to national databases on amounts and sources of greenhouse gas emissions at national and local level.¹⁷ Access to GHG inventory data at national and local level (primarily emphasized by the contribution of City of Skopje, but also eight other municipalities) was made available via their official website and is regularly updated. MEPP also provides relevant information via www.klimatskipromeni.mk. Within the framework of this commitment, Macedonian Government in cooperation with UNDP strengthened capacity for open access to GHG data in agriculture, forestry, and land expropriation beyond the baseline prior to the action plan.¹⁸ CSO representatives were actively involved in the preparation of GHG inventories throughout the entire process.¹⁹

8.3. Ensuring private sector accountability and involvement in national climate change action

Access to Information: Did Not Change

Ultimately, the commitment’s objective was to provide measure that would ensure accountability and involvement of private sector in national climate change action through regulation amendment. The measure intended to connect all information the MEPP requires from the industry in electronic form, thus facilitating reporting and improving the quality of collected data related to air pollution and climate change.²⁰ Prior to the activity implementation period, MEPP received reports on climate data from industry via EMI software. However, the frequency of reporting was unequal, and the amount of information delivered differed from company to company. Activity 8.3.I intended to prepare guidelines to upgrade EMI and at the same time serve as ground for proper regulation that would oblige the private sector to apply a uniformed approach in reporting.

However, only the guidelines were adopted, and still are expected to be incorporated in the (coming) Law on Climate Action; actual changes in practice on access to information are expected after a period from the regulation enactment.

Carried Forward?

All three commitments clustered under this theme have been carried over to the next action plan. The content of Commitment 8.I was amended and carried over to the next action plan under the

fifth theme. The new commitment (5.4) is titled, “To resilient Skopje via data availability” and aims to improve transparency within the City of Skopje by including citizens in the creation of at least two public services that will increase the “resilience” of the City of Skopje, and by organizing a hackathon that will also enable citizens to create solutions.²¹

The content of Commitment 8.2 was also amended and carried over to the next action plan under the seventh theme, Climate Changes. The new commitment (“Achieving system changes by improving the collective knowledge on climate change”) aims to ensure conditions for greater transparency in climate change data.²²

Like Commitment 8.2, Commitment 8.3 was carried over to the next action plan as part of the new Commitment 7.1 (“Achieving system changes by improving the collective knowledge on climate change”). However, part of Commitment 8.3 was also carried over as part of a new commitment titled, “To resilient Skopje via data availability.” The first commitment activity aims to provide free access to a series of data in different sectors that the City of Skopje and its public enterprises have, including transport, energy, water, erosion, greenery, climate change, etc.²³

¹ “IRM Macedonia Progress Report 2016-2017”, OGP, IRM, p. 81, 1 July 2018, available at: <https://bit.ly/2nzMA36>.

² Idem, p. 82.

³ Idem, p. 83. “Open Government National Action Plan 2016-2018”, Open Government Partnership, p. 81, July 2018, available at <https://bit.ly/2lt9sZl>.

⁴ Idem, p. 82.

⁵ Pavlina Zdraveva, UNDP, interview by IRM researcher, 22 August 2018.

⁶ Calendar of Events, MEPP, available at: <http://scc.b1.finki.ukim.mk/#/index/event/64>.

⁷ “Second Bi-Annual Report on Climate change in the Republic of Macedonia”, Government of the Republic of Macedonia, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, available at <https://bit.ly/2AVbduQ>.

⁸ Climate Change, accessed 4 October 2018, www.klimatskipromeni.mk.

⁹ https://di.unfccc.int/ghg_profile_non_annex1 (visited: 25 October 2019).

¹⁰ IRM Macedonia Progress Report 2016-2017, p.83, ibid.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 84d.

¹² Ibid, p. 84.

¹³ “IRM Macedonia Progress Report 2016-2017”, p. 83, ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ “Open Government National Action Plan 2016-2018”, p. 77, ibid.

¹⁶ Pavlina Zdraveva, ibid.

¹⁷ Open Government National Action Plan 2016-2018 , p. 79. Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 83.

¹⁹ Pavlina Zdraveva, ibid.

²⁰ IRM Macedonia Progress Report 2016-2017, p.81, ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid, p. 44.

Methodological Note

The end-of-term report is based on desk research and interviews with governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders. The IRM report builds on the findings of the government's self-assessment report; other assessments of progress put out by civil society, the private sector, or international organizations; and the previous IRM progress report.

The end-of-term report was prepared by IRM staff in collaboration with a team of three researchers from CED Florozon based on qualitative methodology. The main instrument of research were semi-structured interviews. Short desk research was carried out on each commitment. Interviewee selection was mostly based on the primary research plan submitted to OGP for the needs of the midterm report, and corrections were made based on engagement of new persons within commitments or replacements happening in the meantime.

Three types of interviews were implemented, similar to the methodology used for the midterm report, meaning face-to-face (vast majority of interviews) and by exception Viber interviews or email interviews for persons from more distant locations (or unavailable for various reasons). The table of interviewees is as follows:

#	Source	Date	Format of interaction	Topic
1	Keti Stefkova – Ombudsman Office of RM	16 August 2018	Face to face interview	Openness on local level
2	Misa Popovikj – IDSCS	17 August 2018	Face to face interview	Prevention of corruption and promotion of good governance
3	Gabriela Dimovska – CEA	21 August 2018	Face to face interview	Efficient management of public resources
4	Oliver Serafimovski – CRFAPI	22 August 2018	Face to face interview	Freedom of information
5	Marija Risteska – CRPM	22 August 2018	Face to face interview	Openness on local level, participatory policy creating
6	Aleksandar Cekov – CRPM	22 August 2018	Face to face interview	Openness on local level
7	Martin Nikolikj – UNDP	23 August 2018	Face to face interview	Openness on local level
8	Emil Angelov - UNDP	23 August 2018	Face to face interview	Openness on local level
9	Biljana Nastovska - UDNP	23 August 2018	Face to face interview	Openness on local level
10	Gordana Dimitrovska – MISA	23 August 2018	Face to face interview	Participatory policy creating
11	Aleksandar Nikolovski – ZENIT	24 August 2018	Face to face interview	Efficient management of public resources
12	Darko Antic – ESE	27 August 2018	Face to face interview	Freedom of information
13	Dance Danilovska – Bajdevska – FOSM	27 August 2018	Face to face interview	Freedom of information

14	Eli Cakar - MLS	30 August 2018	Face to face interview	Openness on local level
15	Viktor Mitevski – MF	30 August 2018	Face to face interview	Efficient management of public resources
16	Malinka Nikolikj – CCP	31 August 2018	Face to face interview	Efficient management of public resources
17	Martin Todevski – CCM	31 August 2018	Face to face interview	Open data
18	German Filkov – CCC	31 August 2018	Face to face interview	Freedom of information
19	Nadica Josifovski – MISA	11 September 2018	Face to face interview	Open data
20	Sasko Krstevski – SOLE Communication	27 August 2018	Viber interview	Openness on local level
21	Dragica Milosevska – Zenska Akcija	28 August 2018	Email interview	Openness on local level
22	Snezana Kamilovska – MCIC	4 October 2018	Telephone interview	Participatory policy making
23	Blagica Dimitrovska – INKLUZIVA	3 October 2018	Email interview	Openness on local level
24	Suzana Nikodijevik Filipovska – General Secretariat of the Government of RM	22 August 2018	Face to face interview	Participatory policy making
25	Martin Nikolik	23 August 2018	Face to face interview	Participatory policy making
26	Misa Popovikj	17 August 2018	Face to face interview	Prevention of corruption and promotion of good governance
27	Vesna Doneva – State Commission for Prevention of Corruption	30 August 2018	Face to face interview	Prevention of corruption and promotion of good governance
28	Aleksandar Cekov – Center for Research and Policy Making	22 August 2018	Face to face interview	Prevention of corruption and promotion of good governance
29	Darko Antik - Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women in Macedonia	29 August 2018	Face to face interview	Efficient management of public resources
30	Biljana Babushkova - Ministry of Health	13 September 2018	Face to face interview	Efficient management of public resources
31	German Filkov – CCC	31 August 2018	Face to face interview	Efficient management of public resources
32	Evgenija Kirkovski – Secretariat for European Affairs	30 August 2018	Face to face interview	Efficient management of public resources
33	Sofija Spasovska - Ministry of Labor and Social Policy	12 September 2018	Face to face interview	Public services

34	Zlatko Simonovski - Center for Research and Policy Making	22 August 2018	Face to face interview	Public services
35	Pavlina Zdraveva - UNDP	22 August 2018	Face to face interview	Climate changes

Kiril Ristovski is the executive director of the Center for Environmental Democracy (CED) "Florozone". He holds an MA degree in the area of human resources management from the University of Skopje. He is an NGO activist in the field of environmental democracy and environmental access rights.

Nenad Markovikj is an external researcher for CED "Florozone" in the field of social sciences. He is also an associate professor and the head of the political science department of the Law Faculty "Justinian I" in Skopje – Ss. Cyril and Methodius University. He holds a PhD in political science at the University of Skopje and is the editor of the bi-annual academic journal "Political Thought".

Dragan Gocevski is an external researcher for CED "Florozone" in the field of administrative sciences. He is an associate professor at the Department for Administrative Law and Public Administration, "Justinian I" Faculty of Law, Ss Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. He holds a PhD in political science at the University of Skopje.

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, to empower citizens, to fight corruption, and to 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 to improve accountability.

