

On the development of the draft of the New National Action Plan for Promotion of Open Government for the years 2020-2022

The Secretariat of the Commission on Combatting Corruption and the Open Government Initiative Government – Civil Society Dialogue Platform, (hereinafter - Open Government Platform) jointly took a number of steps aimed at elaboration of the draft of a new National Action Plan. The Open Government Platform consists of more than 30 NGOs, 10 state agencies, prosecutors, members of Parliament, and was introduced in 2016 as the mechanism of coordination of the efforts of state bodies and civil society institutions for the application of principles of open government.

“The roadmap for the elaboration of the National Action Plan on Open Government Promotion 2020-2022” (hereinafter - Road Map) was developed by the Open Government Platform member, expert of the “Economic Initiatives Support Center” public union, Samir Aliyev. The project was shared on e-resources and was accepted on February 27, 2019 through the public discussion with the participation of members of the Open Government Platform, independent experts and representatives of international organizations¹.

On May 22, 2019, the Head of the Secretariat of the Commission on Combatting Corruption, National Coordinator of the Open Government Partnership, Mr. Kamal Jafarov spoke about the process of developing a new National Action Plan in a speeches broadcast on ASAN Radio and ProDemos internet TV channel. Mr. K. Jafarov asked all interested parties, civil society organizations, mass media and citizens to take an active participation in this process and submit their comments and suggestions to the Open Government Platform in electronic form².

On May 23, 2019, the Commission on Combatting Corruption announced on its website that the process of drafting a National Action Plan for Promotion of Open Government would be implemented in line with the requirements of the Open Government Partnership Initiative and all civil society institutions are welcome to submit proposals. It was stressed that the widest public and civic engagement will be provided in connection with the drafting of the National Action Plan. Public discussions and hearings, roundtable discussions will be held for all stakeholders, including civil society organizations, the media, and citizens to ensure their involvement in the debates³.

On May 24, 2019, the Open Government Platform announced that, along with other partners, it would actively involve all stakeholders in the process, disseminate information, organize dialogue, collect proposals and feedback, and provide effective and professional consultations.

On June 1, 2019, Mr. Vusal Huseynov, Chairman of the State Migration Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan, was appointed as a High Representative of the Open Government Partnership for the Republic of Azerbaijan⁴.

At the first meeting, held on July 6, 2019, under the chairmanship of Mr. Vusal Huseynov, High Representative of the Open Government Partnership in the Republic of Azerbaijan, the issues of the development of a new draft of the Open Government

¹ <https://www.amerikaninsesi.org/a/açiq-hökümetin-yol-xəritəsi-təqdim-edilib-/4805776.html>

² <https://www.facebook.com/ProDemosAzerbaijan/videos/615582342295191/>

³ <http://antikorrupsiya.gov.az/view.php?lang=az&menu=3&id=481>

⁴ <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/members/azerbaijan/>

Promotion Action Plan, the process of consideration of proposals, involvement of all stakeholders, public discussions and consultations, discussions with stakeholders, as well as, actions for collecting of proposals were discussed^{5 6 7}.

On July 12, 2019, the next meeting of the Working Group for developing of the new National Action Plan for Promotion of Open Government was held at the State Migration Service⁸. The meeting was attended by head of the Secretariat of the Commission on Combatting Corruption of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr. Kamal Jafarov, government officials, coordinator and members of the Open Government Platform of Azerbaijan, as well as NGO representatives. The issues related to improving the rendering of public services in the framework of the drafting of a new NAP for Promotion of Open Government were discussed at the meeting as well.

The next meeting of the working group was held on July 19, 2019 at the State Migration Service. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Secretariat of the Commission on Combatting Corruption of the Republic of Azerbaijan, state bodies, the National NGO Forum and the private sector^{9 10}. In the framework of the meeting the issues of the development of a favorable environment for civil society and proposals for the education sector were discussed.

The next meeting of the Working Group was held on September 13, 2019. Proposals on enhancing the use of e-services, preventing corruption in the health sector, ensuring citizen satisfaction, increasing transparency and accountability were discussed at the meeting¹¹. The meeting was attended by the coordinator and members of the Open Government Platform of Azerbaijan, members of the Public Council under the Ministry of Health, representatives of the private sector, the Commission on Combating Corruption and government officials. Mr. Nurlan Hasanov, an employee of the Secretariat of the Commission on Combatting Corruption, provided information on the agenda and the issues to be discussed.

On September 20, 2019, the next meeting of the Working Group was attended by the head of the Secretariat of the Commission on Combatting Corruption of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr. Kamal Jafarov, members of the Working Group, government agencies, coordinator and members of the Open Government Platform of Azerbaijan, and other NGOs. At the meeting it was stated that there is a need to develop an index of corruption risk assessment by the existing internal control departments in government agencies. It was also mentioned that civil servants are required to participate at training events on anticorruption.

⁵<https://avropa.info/post/321701?fbclid=IwAR3hDzFKdeXXyarmtUp0DjT9KXEw7ICQNTKNwF0SXA8DkOrqs3n79Ffubls>

⁶<http://transparency.az/aciq-hokum%c9%99tin-t%c9%99sviqi-uzr%c9%99-yeni-millif%c9%99aliyy%c9%99t-planinin-hazirlanmasi-muzakir%c9%99-edilib/?fbclid=IwAR27BB2DdW0FDtBK3FCmxBHJpXc5-KbCsmmUrxlvJ78dr57sCj1005BC90M>

⁷https://www.facebook.com/opengovplatformaz/posts/635115520322473?_tn_ =K-R

⁸<http://ogp.org.az/az/index.php/2019/07/15/111/>

⁹<https://azvision.az/news/184677/vetendas-cemiyeti-ucun-elverisli-muhitin-yaradilmasi-muzakire-edilib.html>

¹⁰<http://qaynarinfo.az/az/vetendas-cemiyeti-ucun-elverisli-muhitin-yaradilmasi-muzakire-edilib/>

¹¹<https://strateq.az/xeber/375583/səhiyyə-sektorunda-səffafliq-və-hesabatlıliqin-artirilməsi-muzakire-olunub.html>

On October 4, 2019, the issues of financial transparency were discussed at the next meeting of the Working Group on the development of a new National Action Plan for Promotion of Open Government¹². The meeting was attended by representatives of the Secretariat of the Commission on Combatting Corruption, members of the working group, representatives of the government agencies, coordinator of the Open Government Platform of Azerbaijan, Mr. Alimammad Nuriyev, Platform members and other NGO members.

As of October 3, 2019, online discussions on a new National Action Plan have been launched. Open Government Platform Coordinator Mr. Alimammad Nuriyev participated in the first live broadcast in the framework of the “Promotion of Open Government Initiatives” project implemented by the Azerbaijan Open Government Platform and supported by the Council of State Support to NGOs under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Mr. A.Nuriyev answered questions about the process of development of the NAP, planned measures and opportunities for the civil society institutions.¹³

On October 3, 2019, at 17.00, Mr. Hafiz Hasanov, a member of the Open Government Platform of Azerbaijan, chairman of “the Law and Development” Public Union, a well-known lawyer, introduced judicial reforms reflected in the NAP, answered questions in the live broadcast about improving the practice of e-court and review of the citizens' appeals, resolving problems in this area, and elaborated proposals¹⁴.

On October 10, 2019, at 15.00, the Open Government Debates started live on the Azerbaijan Open Government Platform Facebook page. In the first debate, head of Multimedia Center (NGO) Mr. Osman Gunduz and Director of E-Government Development Center under the State Agency for Public Services and Social Innovations Mr. Fariz Jafarov answered questions of citizens with regards to the e-government and the measures for e-government development¹⁵.

On October 18, 2019 at 17:00, a well-known expert Mr. Samir Aliyev answered questions on live coverage of the Open Government Platform's Facebook page on the issues of financial transparency in the framework of the new NAP, civil society proposals and concerns¹⁶.

On October 19, 2019, the Head of the Secretariat of the Commission on Combatting Corruption Mr. Kamal Jafarov and Open Government Platform Coordinator Mr. Alimammad Nuriyev discussed the work carried out in Azerbaijan on the promotion of the open government initiatives and the new NAP on the air “Lider” TV channel¹⁷.

On November 11, 2019, the International Press Center hosted a public discussion of the new NAP. At the event, representatives of civil society and government agencies discussed the proposals on the new NAP¹⁸.

¹² <http://ogp.org.az/az/index.php/2019/10/16/aciq-hokumet-plani-layihesinde-maliyye-seffafligi-meseleleri-muzakire-olunub/>

¹³ <http://ogp.org.az/az/index.php/2019/10/03/yeni-aciq-hokumet-plani-ile-bagli-onlayn-muzakireler-baslayib/>

¹⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/opengovplatformaz/videos/384993422452744/>

¹⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/opengovplatformaz/videos/2713221005389336/>

¹⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/opengovplatformaz/videos/494513244463180/>

¹⁷ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z0tkENnUY_g&feature=emb_title

¹⁸ <http://ogp.org.az/az/index.php/2019/11/11/yeni-aciq-hokumet-plani-ile-bagli-vetendas-cemiyetinin-teklifleri-teqdim-edilib/>

On December 5, 2019 the Parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan was dissolved and new early elections were called. This impacted the process of NAP drafting, since it took longer to receive some approvals. Nevertheless, the final draft of NAP was prepared, sent to all the stakeholders and posted on the website of Commission on Combatting Corruption.¹⁹

On February 8, 2020 discussion of the final draft of the National Action Plan on Open Government Promotion for 2020-2022 was held. The discussion at the State Migration Service was attended by high-level representative of the Open Government Partnership for Azerbaijan, Mr. Vusal Huseynov, civil society representatives, members of the Government-Civil Society Dialogue Platform, independent experts, as well as the representatives of the Presidential Administration, the Anti-Corruption Directorate with the Prosecutor General of the Republic of Azerbaijan, representatives of the State Agency for Citizen Service and Social Innovations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the State Migration Service and other government agencies. At the meeting, the final draft of the National Action Plan was discussed in detail, some suggestions for its improvement were made, and it was decided to submit the draft of the new NAP to the Administration of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan for approval.²⁰²¹²²

¹⁹ <http://www.commission-anticorruption.gov.az/view.php?lang=az&menu=49>

²⁰ <http://www.commission-anticorruption.gov.az/view.php?lang=az&menu=3&id=484>

²¹ https://www.migration.gov.az/press/news_content/13881

²² <http://ogp.org.az/az/index.php/2020/02/09/234/>