

Action plan for the implementation of the Open Government Partnership initiative in the Republic of Serbia for 2020-2022

I. INTRODUCTION

The Open Government Partnership (hereinafter: OGP)¹ is an international initiative aimed at securing the support and greater engagement of governments around the world to improve the integrity, transparency, efficiency and accountability of public authorities, through building public confidence, cooperation with civil society organizations (hereinafter: CSO), strengthening citizen participation in governance, the fight against corruption, access to information and the use of new technologies.

At the same time, OGP is an excellent platform for cooperation between the government, citizens and CSO, and a powerful instrument for improving its transparency, accountability and efficiency, but also for meeting certain criteria in the process of accession to the European Union, which is the Republic of Serbia's main strategic priority.

As a candidate country for membership in the European Union, the Republic of Serbia is making significant efforts to reform and modernize its public administration in accordance with the set standards. These reform processes, which aim to provide high quality services to citizens and businesses and create public administration that will contribute to economic stability and increase the living standards of citizens, are fully complementary to the values of OGP, which complement each other and jointly contribute to the concept of open government.

By participating in the mentioned global initiative, the Republic of Serbia supports the basic values contained in the OGP Declaration,² striving for their full implementation and improvement. Also, bearing in mind that the OGP is a voluntary initiative, active participation and results so far show a commitment to reform processes in the areas covered by this initiative and continuous work on "opening" the government to citizens. Striving to become a modern state with a government that is a service to citizens, established partnership and better support to citizens and the economy, participation in the OGP initiative and implementation of activities in accordance with the values promoted by the OGP, should significantly improve the chances of reaching these goals.

In addition to the concrete results achieved by the implementation of commitments from previous action plans, through participation in the OGP, extremely important topics have been initiated and promoted so far, such as "open data" and their reuse, citizen participation in decision-making, cooperation of public authorities with CSOs and improvement of public service delivery.

So far, the Republic of Serbia has adopted and presented to the Partnership three action plans³ which have taken measures in the direction of upgrading the commitments defined by other public policy documents, which improve the situation within the values of the OGP. During the development of these action plans, improvement was achieved when it comes to cooperation with the civil sector, which continued in this, fourth cycle of the Action Plan for the implementation of the Open Government Partnership initiative in the Republic of Serbia for

¹ <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/>

² <http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/deklaracija-ogp.doc?script=lat>

³ Action Plan for the Implementation of the Open Government Partnership Initiative in the Republic of Serbia for 2014 and 2015 ("Official Gazette of the RS", No. 14/14), Action Plan for the Implementation of the Open Government Partnership Initiative in the Republic of Serbia for 2016 and 2017 ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 93/16) and the Action Plan for the implementation of the initiative Partnership for Open Government in the Republic of Serbia for 2018-2020 ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 105/18).

2020-2022 (hereinafter: the Action Plan), which will be discussed in more detail in the section describing the way in which the Action Plan is prepared.

When it comes to the importance of OGP and the implementation of its values in the Republic of Serbia, it is important to note that within the fourth cycle, the need for further improvement of various aspects of the action plan preparation process was stated, in order to improve the efficiency of the overall OGP participation. In this sense, in order to better the transformative potential of the commitment contained in the action plans, it is necessary to ensure more active engagement and greater readiness of state administration bodies to take concrete measures that would significantly improve the existing situation, especially in areas such as government integrity and fiscal transparency. Also, a need to strengthen the position and role of multi-stakeholder forum was noticed, with special emphasis on the further development of cooperation and improving the participation of CSOs in OGP processes. With this in mind, in the forthcoming period it is important to start the process of modification and further raising the level of cross-sectoral cooperation, in order to enable the significant contribution of CSOs to the final formulation of commitments and the overall efficiency of stakeholder forum, including the implementation of the key recommendation 1 of the Independent Reporting Mechanism (hereinafter: IRM) which refers to ensuring stronger support to the national OGP process at a higher political level.⁴

It is important to keep in mind that the process of drafting and adopting this Action Plan took place in specific circumstances caused by the global pandemic of the COVID-19 virus, as well as that 2020 was an election year in the Republic of Serbia, where elections were held at all levels – national, provincial and local. These circumstances certainly affected the efficiency and dynamics of planned and implemented activities in this process.

Given the priorities expressed in the drafting process by CSOs and competent state administration bodies, the fourth Action Plan includes 12 commitments that include activities aimed at improving the value of OGP in various areas.

II. OPEN GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO DATE

In the period of realization of the previous Action Plan for the implementation of OGP in the Republic of Serbia for 2018-2020⁵, as well as during the development of this Action Plan, efforts continued to be made in the direction of improving various segments of open government in the Republic of Serbia. Most of these activities took place within the public administration reform, a process that is fully complementary to the realization of the open government principles and the participation of the Republic of Serbia in the OGP. In the mentioned period, further progress was made in the modernization of public administration through the process of digitalization of public services, opening databases and the simplification of administrative procedures intended for citizens and the economy. Progress was also made in creating legal conditions for greater citizen participation in making decisions, developing a concept of responsibilities and a competency-based civil service system, providing more efficient public services, but also ensuring macroeconomic and financial stability and public financial management as important precondition for the implementation of reform measures.

⁴ See pages 20-22 for more information on IRM recommendations.

⁵ For more information on the implementation of the previous action plan, see the Draft Final Report - Self-Assessment on the Implementation of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the OGP in the Republic of Serbia between 2018 and 2020, which is available at

<http://mduls.gov.rs/javne-rasprave-i-konsultacije/konsultacije-o-nacrtu-konacnog-izvestaja-samoproceni-implementacije-akcionog-plana-za-sprovođenje-inicijative-partnerstvo-za-otvorenu-upravu-2018-2020-godine/> .

Overall, the activities undertaken within these processes have taken further steps in bringing the administration closer to citizens and the economy and developing a system that will respond more effectively to their needs.

On the other hand, limited administrative capacities have remained one of the present challenges in the implementation of reform processes in the observed period. In addition, almost the entirety of 2020 was marked by the global pandemic of the COVID-19 virus, which required a certain period of adjustment in the work of the administration in very specific and new circumstances. Together with the pandemic, holding elections at all levels during the same year and forming a new Government⁶ affected the efficiency of the implementation of planned reform measures and the achieved results, but also the process of drafting this action plan, as mentioned in the introductory section.

In the conditions of the COVID-19 virus pandemic, the Republic of Serbia's capacities that were built up in the previous period in the direction of the better provision of services intended for citizens and the economy and the digitalization of said services were used up, which enabled the development of new services adapted to the needs of citizens in the existing circumstances.

In order to inform and support citizens, the following have been established: **Contact Center for COVID-19 at 19819**⁷ (by calling this number free of charge, citizens can get advice and recommendations from experts in the fight against the coronavirus, as well as contact the relevant professional services throughout the country); **Contact Center for Assistance to the Elderly on the number 19920**⁸ (by calling this number free of charge, citizens can call for help with the procurement of groceries, medicine and other necessities in the city and municipal centers where volunteers are engaged); **Information on COVID-19**⁹ (a website for publishing the latest information relevant to the pandemic); **a Viber service**¹⁰ that provides all the necessary information related to the pandemic; **Digital Solidarity**¹¹ (provides free access to various platforms and services, provided by IT companies, telecommunication companies, cultural and educational institutions, various associations, the market, innovation centers and many others, for use in conditions of limited movement and social distancing).

When it comes to e-services meant to support citizens and aid the implementation of certain services related to COVID-19, among those developed are: **the application for submitting a request for a movement permit** during the ban on movement¹²; **the self-assessment test for COVID-19**¹³ (on the www.ezdravlje.gov.rs Portal, a self-assessment test is available, after which users receive further guidelines on how to proceed and direct communication with outpatient units from the supervision system, where users can ask additional questions); **eScheduling for PCR testing**¹⁴ at a personal request (available since October 2020); automatic **notification service** which operates 24 hours a day via e-mail and

⁶ Elections for deputies in the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia (so-called parliamentary elections), as well as elections for deputies in the Assembly of AP Vojvodina, i.e. elections for councilors in the assemblies of local self-government units, were held on June 21, 2020. The Government of the Republic of Serbia was formed on October 28, 2020.

⁷ For more information on the Contact Center for COVID-19 see <https://bit.ly/3e8PBO6>.

⁸ For more information on the Contact Center for the Assistance to the Elderly see <https://bit.ly/3e8PBO6>.

⁹ <https://covid19.rs/>

¹⁰ <https://chats.viber.com/covid19info>

¹¹ <https://www.digitalnasolidarnost.gov.rs/>

¹² <http://mduls.gov.rs/reforma-javne-uprave-u-srbiji/aktuelnosti/elektronsko-izdavanje-dozvola-za-kretanje-za-vreme-zabrane-kretanja-za-osobe-koje-pruzaju-usluge-socijalne-pomoci/?script=cir> Note: The service was functional during the period of the ban and restricted movement.

¹³ <https://www.e-zdravlje.gov.rs/landing/?v=20201030>

¹⁴ <https://euprava.gov.rs/usluge/6096>

SMS, letting the users know that the **PCR testing results** are ready (available from July 2020);¹⁵ the possibility of **insight into the test results via the eHealth portal** (available from July 2020).¹⁶

With the use of technology and innovations, the Republic of Serbia also responded to challenges in the field of education. First of all, it was ensured that, in the conditions of the pandemic, the school year 2019/2020 could successfully be brought to an end, using the following methods: **the realization of the curriculum on public media services**, including teaching in the languages of ethnic minorities, using the existing portal RTS Planet,¹⁷ as well as using the newly established portal **My School**¹⁸ which contains all necessary instructions and educational materials and is also available in the form of a mobile application. Additionally, adequate measures have been taken in order to implement other planned processes in the field of education, so the e-service **Expression of interest for enrollment in primary school**¹⁹ has been introduced (a service through which parents could express interest in a particular school in which they intend to enroll their child), then the service **eSchedule appointments for enrollment and testing**²⁰ of future first grade students (a service that allowed parents to carry out these activities at a specific, scheduled time, without waiting and exposing themselves to the risk of disease), as part of the preparations for the final exam, an **online test for the self-assessment of knowledge for eighth grade students** was conducted²¹ via a platform called www.mojaucionica.gov.rs, and the concept of digitization of the final exam process – the minor, was presented, a process which digitized all phases of taking this exam, except for the very development of tests by students. Results that were especially notable were achieved by the **eKindergarten**²² service, which enabled electronic application for the enrollment of children in preschool institutions via a simple electronic form and with the acquisition of the necessary documentation by the preschool institutions themselves ex officio.

As part of the measures meant to support the economy, specifically in the case of small agricultural producers who were suddenly left without a marketplace or opportunities to market their products, an **eMarketplace** portal was created, one that allows these businesses to register and present themselves on an interactive map, and allows citizens to contact them based on the available data.²³ This portal enables the mentioned categories of producers to continue their work in the conditions of a pandemic and the prescribed measures for its suppression, and the citizens to satisfy their needs by ordering their desired products without exposing themselves to physical contact. Also, in order to mitigate the negative consequences of the pandemic on the growth of the gray economy, a unique **Contact Center of Republic Inspections** was established, to which citizens and the economy can report in case any prices of food, medicine,

¹⁵ <https://euprava.gov.rs/usluge/5886>

¹⁶ <https://www.e-zdravlje.gov.rs/landing/>

¹⁷ <https://rtsplaneta.rs/video/list/category/516/>

¹⁸ <https://www.mojaskola.gov.rs/>

¹⁹ <https://www.ite.gov.rs/vest/4894/od-1-aprila-mogucnost-iskazivanja-interesovanja-za-upis-dece-u-osnovnu-skolu-elektronskim-putem.php>

²⁰ <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/466455/elektronsko-zakazivanje-za-upis-i-testiranje-prvaka-od-28-maja.php> Note: The service was available from May 28 to July 10, 2020.

²¹ <https://www.ite.gov.rs/vest/4930/onlajn-testiranje-za-ucenike-osmog-razreda.php>

²² <https://euprava.gov.rs/vrtic>

²³ The eMarket portal is available at <https://pijaca.minpolj.gov.rs/>.

medical devices and protective equipment are raised illegally, both by phone and via the www.inspektor.gov.rs website.²⁴

The contact center is connected with all local self-governments, which enables the applications by citizens and businesses that are not within the competence of the republic inspections, to be forwarded to the competent inspections at the local level.

The results achieved in the previous period through the initiative of **the opening and reuse of data** were also visible and contributed to the response of the Republic of Serbia to the challenges related to the pandemic. Within the new www.covid19.data.gov.rs Portal, the Office for Information Technologies and e-Government opened data on the number of citizens in self-isolation, the number of citizens infected with the COVID-19 virus, as well as the number of citizens who were tested, hospitalized and deceased on the territory of the Republic of Serbia.²⁵

In addition to the mentioned results that emerged in response to the challenges of the pandemic, during 2019 and 2020, the OGP Action Plan for 2018-2020 was implemented and the OGP Action Plan for 2020-2022 was prepared, and other notable advances have also been made in improving the values and principles of open government.

In the mentioned period, the **comprehensive process of public administration reform continued** through the realization of the Action Plan for the implementation of the Public Administration Reform Strategy in the Republic of Serbia for the 2018-2020 period²⁶. All the results that the implementation of this Action Plan managed to achieve have contributed to the improvement of OGP values, due to the high degree of harmonization of directions and priorities of the public administration reform in the Republic of Serbia with the basic principles on which the concept of open government is based.

In addition, in the observed period, with the participation of civil society, the first External Evaluation of the Public Administration Reform Strategy in the Republic of Serbia was conducted, which, among other things, showed a clear need to develop a new umbrella public policy document in this area. Accordingly, work on a new Public Administration Reform Strategy for 2021-2030 was officially started in August 2019, when, at the same time, the consultation process was opened through the election of civil society representatives to the working group in charge of preparing this document.²⁷

Governed by the principles of the OGP and the Principles of Public Administration SIGMA/OECD, as well as national regulations governing the system of public policy planning, the development and monitoring of the implementation of these documents is realized in full cooperation with civil society. Representatives of CSOs were members of the working group that was in charge of drafting the Action Plan for the implementation of the Public

²⁴ Registration is done via the online form available at <https://inspektor.gov.rs/submission>. For more information on the contact center, see <http://mduls.gov.rs/saopstenja/otvoren-jedinstveni-kontakt-centar-za-prijavljivanje-nezakonitosti-u-vremepandemije-korona-virusa/>

²⁵ Note: Data on the number of infected people on a daily basis by local governments were updated as of June 10, 2020, while data on self-isolation were updated as of October 13, 2020.

²⁶ Decision on amendments to the Public Administration Reform Strategy in the Republic of Serbia with the Action Plan for the implementation of the Public Administration Reform Strategy in the Republic of Serbia for 2018-2020 ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 54/18). For more information on the results of the implementation of this action plan, see: Annual Report for 2019 on the implementation of the Action Plan for the implementation of the Public Administration Reform Strategy for 2018-2020, <https://monitoring.mduls.gov.rs/downloadFile/?id=11130&type=doc>. Data for this report were collected for activities that had any quarter in 2019 for the implementation deadline or that were transferred due to non-execution from 2018 to 2019.

²⁷ <http://mduls.gov.rs/obavestjenja/poceo-rad-na-strategija-reforme-javne-uprave-nakon-2021-godine-poziv-i-ocd-da-se-ukljuce/>

Administration Reform Strategy in the Republic of Serbia for 2018-2022, as well as the working group that monitors its implementation. Also, the civil sector participated in the evaluation of the current Public Administration Reform Strategy in the Republic of Serbia, and is currently participating in the work of the working group in charge of drafting the new Strategy.²⁸ Finally, in order to improve the citizens' public administration reform monitoring capabilities, and the visibility of the results achieved, a special *online* application was created to monitor and report on the implementation of the Public Administration Reform www.monitoring.mduls.gov.rs, which is also a tool for managing potential risks.

Engagement in the direction of public administration reform is also visible through the support that the European Union provides to the Republic of Serbia based on the achieved results and the fulfillment of indicators from the Sector Reform Contract for the public administration and public finance reform.²⁹ After the European Commission approved the payment of 30.5 million Euros in October 2018, based on the results achieved in 2016, at the end of 2019, another 13,250,000 Euros were approved for the indicators achieved during 2017 and the first half of 2018.³⁰

In the area of **the participation of citizens in decision-making processes**, normative steps have continued in the direction of improving the conditions for civic participation in decision-making processes. After laying the foundations in 2018 through the adoption of the Law on the Planning System of the Republic of Serbia and amendments to the Law on State Administration and the Law on Local Self-Government, the Government of the Republic of Serbia continued with its activities in this direction by adopting bylaws in 2019. Thus, in January 2019, the **Regulation on the Methodology of Public Policy Management, Policy and Regulatory Impact Assessment, and Content of Individual Public Policy Documents** was adopted,³¹ as a bylaw of the Law on the Planning System of the Republic of Serbia, while in July, the **Rulebook on the Guidelines for Good Practice for Public Participation in the Preparation of Draft Laws and Other Regulations and Acts** was adopted, as a bylaw of the Law on Public Administration. These regulations prescribe the **mandatory realization of consultations at all stages of preparation of regulations and public documents** in detail, that is public debates in the preparation of public documents, including the definition of consultation methods, obligations, methods and forms of reporting on consultations, as well as the involvement of the participation of interested parties and target groups in working groups.

In order to regulate the process of inclusion of CSOs in working groups more closely, and make it as transparent as possible, at the proposal of the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society (hereinafter: OCCS), in January 2020, the Government adopted **Guidelines for the Inclusion of CSOs in Working Groups for Drafting Public Policy Documents Proposals and Drafts, i.e. Proposals of Regulations**.³²

²⁸ The Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government and the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society conducted a public call for the selection of CSO in this working group. <http://mduls.gov.rs/obavestenja/rezultati-javnog-poziva-ocd-za-clanstvo-u-posebnoj-radnoj-grupi-za-izradu-predloga-strategije-reforme-javne-uprave-nakon-2021-godine/>

²⁹ <http://mduls.gov.rs/projekti-i-programi/sektorski-reformski-ugovor-za-sektor-reforme-javne-uprave/>

³⁰ The Sector Reform Contract was signed on December 5, 2016 and has a total value of 80 million Euros, of which 70 million represents direct support to the budget, while the remaining 10 million Euros are directed to the support of the Government of Serbia through projects. http://mduls.gov.rs/saopstenja/jos-13-miliona-evra-u-budzet-srbije-od-eu-zbog-uspeha-u-reformi-javne-uprave-i-javnih-finansija/#_ftn1

³¹ Regulation on the Methodology of Public Policy Management, Policy and Regulatory Impact Assessment, and Content of Individual Public Policy Documents ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 8/19)

³² Guidelines for the Inclusion of CSOs in Working Groups for Drafting Public Policy Documents Proposals and Drafts, ie Proposals of Regulations ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 8/20)

The purpose of these guidelines is to regulate and encourage the involvement of interest parties and target groups, primarily CSOs, in working groups formed by state administration bodies and thus ensure their participation at the earliest possible stage of the decision-making process. In addition, their implementation seeks to ensure the raising of the preparation process quality, but also the implementation of regulations and public policy documents through the involvement of civil society representatives who have relevant experience and expertise in a particular field.

When it comes to cooperation with civil society in the adoption of regulations and public policy documents, OCCS data show **a significant increase in the number of requests for support in involving CSOs in these processes.** The continuation of the positive trend is especially visible in the number of public calls sent by state administration bodies for the participation of CSOs in various types of consultations and public debates. Namely, during 2019, 44 calls for consultations and public debates were sent through OCCS, which is a significant step forward given that the number of these calls was 31 in 2018.³³ In addition, in early 2020, the OCCS established a **Database of Contact Points (persons) for cooperation with CSOs** in government bodies at all three levels of government – national, provincial and local – whose purpose is to enable and encourage direct communication and cooperation between government and civil society, especially in decision-making processes, but also mutual cooperation and the exchange of experiences of public administration bodies in this area.³⁴ Public participation in decision-making processes has also been recognized as an important **topic when it comes to the professional development of civil servants and employees in local self-government units** (hereinafter: LGSs). All four programs for the professional development of civil servants and employees in local self-government units in 2019 and 2020 included training sessions on this topic, mainly as part of training dedicated to the process of creating public policies and drafting regulations, but also the cooperation between public administration bodies and civil society. In 2019, OCCS, partnered with the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (hereinafter: SCTM), conducted seven two-day trainings for local self-government employees on the topic “Cooperation with CSOs and funding public interest programs implemented by associations,” in which 123 employees from 61 local self-government units were included. The realization of the mentioned training programs represents an upgrade of the Commitment 13 from the previous Action Plan, which included support for the improvement of cooperation between public administration bodies and CSOs in the process of preparation, adoption and monitoring of regulations application.

As part of the **data opening initiative**, thanks to the support of the “Open Data – Open Opportunities” Project, grants were awarded for the implementation of five projects, as well as for challenges to solve problems using open data. Three rounds of challenges were organized, which resulted in a number of applications and visualizations, and the “Forests and Climate”³⁵ application received the European award for the best solution in the field of environmental protection. Another successful application is the “Municipalities of Serbia through open data,” which provides visualizations of the most important social and economic characteristics of all municipalities in Serbia.³⁶

³³ Website of the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society,

<http://www.civilnodrustvo.gov.rs/инфо-сервис/ПОЗИВИ/ПОЗИВИ.77.html?tabId=0>

³⁴ Appointed contact points for cooperation with CSOs in administrative bodies <https://bit.ly/2vhnIRR>

³⁵ <https://sumeiklima.org/>

³⁶ <https://opstine.data.gov.rs/>

One of the positive examples of the reuse of open data is related to the Commitment 5 from the third Action Plan, which included the preparation of the Reports/Indicators on CSOs (associations, foundations and endowments) in an open format. Namely, within the implementation of this commitment, OCCS, in cooperation with the Business Registers Agency (hereinafter: BRA), opened and published data on the numbers of CSOs and its structure in the Republic of Serbia on the Open Data Portal, based on data provided by the Register of Associations and the Register of Endowments and a foundation, maintained by the Business Registers Agency, which are collected at a certain time interval. Based on these data, the **Catalyst Balkans Foundation has created the www.neprofitne.rs Platform** to assess the transparency and integrity of non-profit organizations, through which CSOs can show their openness and influence, and the donor community can make decisions about who to support.

The importance of opening and reusing data is increasingly visible at the local level as well. The **cities Niš, Kragujevac, Užice, Subotica and Belgrade opened data on public transport** in a format that is standard for this type of data, which enabled their use on *Google* maps. Thus, the citizens of Serbia and all users of public transport in these cities have access to data on all city lines, timetables, stop locations, routes and ticket prices in public transport on the *Google* map.

In December 2020, out of a total of 174 local governments, more than 90 of them published their budgets in a machine-readable format, based on which the **"Open Budgets" Platform** was created, available at www.budzeti.data.gov.rs. This platform shows the planned revenues and expenditures of cities and municipalities in the Republic of Serbia in a simple and easy-to-understand way, and allows downloading data in an open format, which is standardized for all local governments, thus providing the ability to analyze and compare data and their further use.

In the following period, the entry of data for the remaining local self-governments will continue. This activity is especially important bearing in mind that the IRM key recommendation number 2 for the Action Plan for 2018-2020 implied introduction of the concept of open budgeting at the national and local level, with special publication of financial plans and cost reports in the form of open data. Although the mentioned recommendation in the part related to the local level of government could not be included in the mentioned action plan, considering that it is an area within the competence of the local self-government, the mentioned activities represent a step in the desired direction.

Since the official launch of the national **Open Data Portal** in mid-October 2017, when it contained about twenty data sets, the number of available open data sets has multiplied. Currently, 300 data sets can be found on it, i.e. 164 sets more than back in 2018, while the number of institutions that publish their data on the Portal has increased compared to 2018 by over 60% - by December 2020, 52 institutions published data in an open format.³⁷ The portal contains data related to car accidents, public transport, environmental protection, statistical data, geospatial data, data on medicines, etc.

When it comes to **more efficient public service delivery to citizens and the economy**, through the **opening of one-stop shops (OSS)** it is possible for citizens to complete more services in one place. So far, a total of 11 OSS have been opened: in Lazarevac,³⁸ Smederevska

³⁷ Data source: Open data portal <https://data.gov.rs/sr/datasets/>, on December 15, 2020.

³⁸ <http://mduls.gov.rs/saopstenja/ruzic-lazarevac-dobio-jedinstveno-upravno-mesto-za-brze-i-efikasnije-usluge-gradjanima/>

Palanka,³⁹ Bela Palanka,⁴⁰ Sombor,⁴¹ Žitište,⁴² Kruševac,⁴³ Šabac,⁴⁴ Užice,⁴⁵ Vlasotince,⁴⁶ Gornji Milanovac⁴⁷ and Rača,⁴⁸ while support was provided for opening one-stop shops in six more local self-governments: Kuršumlija, Stara Pazova, Pirot,⁴⁹ Paraćin, Topola and Kosjerić.⁵⁰ One of the examples of good practice in providing services is the **Serbian-Korean Information Access Center (SKIA Center)**,⁵¹ which, for the second time in a row, was named the best in the world in the category of 53 similar access centers, with 567 instructional and training programs and conferences and 13,753 participants in 2019.⁵² In order to further improve services intended for citizens, using existing capacities and examples of good practice, the SKIA Center is involved in the implementation of this Action Plan through the organization of training programs for the use of eParticipation Portal aimed at interested members of the public, which will be developed under Commitment 3,.

During 2019 and 2020, the establishment of the legal and strategic framework for the **development of eGovernment** continued. Key developments in this area include the adoption of the **Law on the Central Population Register**⁵³ and the **Law on the Register of Spatial Units and Address Register**,⁵⁴ while in order to improve the business environment by reducing the administrative burden on the economy in 2019, the **Program for the Simplification of Administrative Procedures and the Regulations - ePaper** was brought for 2019-2021.⁵⁵ The adoption of this program is directly related to Commitment 9 of the OGP Action Plan for 2018-2020, which included the simplification of administrative procedures and regulations. Finally, in June 2020, the **Program for the Development of Electronic Government in Serbia for 2020-2022**⁵⁶ was adopted, together with the Action Plan for its implementation, which predicts about 300 new electronic services and services for citizens and the economy that will be developed during its implementation.

In the domain of improving the **public authorities' responsibility**, the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia passed a new **Law on Prevention of Corruption** in May 2019, which stipulates the obligation to attend training on ethics and integrity for all employees in public administration, as well as increased competencies of the Agency for Prevention of

³⁹ <http://mduls.gov.rs/saopstenja/ministar-ruzic-otvorio-jedinstveno-upravno-mesto-u-smederevskoj-palanci/>

⁴⁰ <http://mduls.gov.rs/saopstenja/ruzic-otvorio-jedinstveno-upravno-mesto-u-beloj-palanci/>

⁴¹ <http://mduls.gov.rs/saopstenja/ministar-ruzic-otvorio-jedinstveno-upravno-mesto-u-somboru/>

⁴² <http://mduls.gov.rs/reforma-javne-uprave-u-srbiji/aktuelnosti/jedinstveno-upravno-mesto-i-u-zitistu/>

⁴³ <http://mduls.gov.rs/saopstenja/ruzic-otvorio-jedinstveno-upravno-mesto-u-krusevcu/>

⁴⁴ <http://mduls.gov.rs/saopstenja/ruzic-otvorio-jedinstveno-upravno-mesto-u-sapcu/>

⁴⁵ <http://mduls.gov.rs/saopstenja/ruzic-otvorio-jedinstveno-upravno-mesto-u-uzicu/>

⁴⁶ <http://mduls.gov.rs/reforma-javne-uprave-u-srbiji/aktuelnosti/gradjani-uzica-i-vlasotinca-dobili-jedinstveno-upravno-mesto/>

⁴⁷ <http://mduls.gov.rs/saopstenja/otvoreno-jedinstveno-upravno-mesto-u-gornjem-milanovcu/>

⁴⁸ <http://mduls.gov.rs/saopstenja/opstina-raca-otvorila-jedinstveno-upravno-mesto/>

⁴⁹ <http://mduls.gov.rs/saopstenja/podrska-za-otvaranje-jedinstvenog-upravnog-mesta-u-jos-sest-gradova-i-opstina/>

⁵⁰ <http://mduls.gov.rs/saopstenja/opstine-paracin-topola-i-kosjeric-dobijaju-jedinstveno-upravno-mesto/>

⁵¹ http://skipcentar.rs/sr_RS/

⁵² Data source: Annual Report for 2019 on the implementation of the Action Plan for the implementation of the Public Administration Reform Strategy from 2018 to 2020, p. 32.

<https://monitoring.mduls.gov.rs/downloadFile/?id=11130&type=doc>

⁵³ Law on the Central Population Register ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 17/19)

⁵⁴ Law on the Register of Spatial Units and the Address Register ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 9/20)

⁵⁵ <https://rsjp.gov.rs/cir/vesti-cir/usvojen-program-za-pojednostavljenje-administrativnih-postupaka-i-regulative-e-papir/>.

⁵⁶ Electronic Government Development Program in the Republic of Serbia from 2020 to 2022 with the Action Plan for its implementation ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 85/20)

Corruption.⁵⁷ Also, in July 2020, a **revised Action Plan for Chapter 23**⁵⁸ was adopted, which, in addition to basic rights, also covers the area of the fight against corruption, as well as the improvement of the independence, impartiality and accountability of the judiciary. For the purpose of improving the planning system, but also the degree of responsibility in users of public funds, based on the Law on Planning System of the Republic of Serbia, in January 2019, the **Regulation on the Methodology of Drafting Medium-Term Plans**⁵⁹ was adopted, which regulates more closely the issue of medium-term planning. The obligation to develop medium-term plans enables the connection between public policies and the medium-term expenditure framework. Their publication and annual reporting on achieved results provide public insight into the work of public funds users, including the way funds are spent in relation to activities undertaken, and encourage public authorities' responsibility. It should be added that, in accordance with the **Law on Central Record of Beneficial Owners**,⁶⁰ which was adopted in late 2018, and in early 2019, the **Central Register of Beneficial Owners** was established and put into operation, the register of beneficial owners of various categories of legal entities (companies, associations, endowments, foundations, etc.).⁶¹

Finally, during the third OGP cycle, **progress has been made when it comes to the transparency of local governments in the Republic of Serbia**. According to the results of the research by the Local Self-Government Transparency Index - LTI,⁶² the average index increased from 40 in 2019 to 46 in 2020, and Bečej, Novi Pazar and Sombor⁶³ stood out as leaders in transparency.

During 2019, significant activities were undertaken in the direction of **promoting the OGP, its values and the results achieved, as well as the Action Plan for 2018-2020**, at the local, national and international levels.

Bearing in mind that the local level of government is the closest to the citizens and, as a rule, the first one they address when they encounter problems, special attention is paid to working with local self-government units to their greater involvement in national OGP activities, but also to implementing OGP values in the local community. With the support of the CSO Consortium, which received funding from the OGP donor fund in 2018, **local action plans for an open government** were previously developed and adopted by three local self-governments⁶⁴ – Novi Pazar,⁶⁵ Vlasotince,⁶⁶ and Lapovo,⁶⁷ while Šabac independently prepared

⁵⁷ Law on Prevention of Corruption ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 35/19 and 88/19). In accordance with this law, as of September 1, 2020, the previous name of the Agency for the Fight Against Corruption was changed to the Anti-Corruption Agency.

⁵⁸ Action Plan for Chapter 23 <https://www.mpravde.gov.rs/files/Revidirani%20AP23%202207.pdf>

⁵⁹ Regulation on the Methodology of Drafting Medium-Term Plans ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 9/19)

⁶⁰ Law on Central Records of Beneficial Owners ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 41/2018 and 91/2019)

⁶¹ <https://bit.ly/36fnNFA>

⁶² Local Government Transparency Index is an annual survey conducted by CSO Transparency Serbia for the purpose of assessing and ranking local governments based on the transparency index. See:

<https://www.transparentnost.org.rs/index.php/sr/istraivanja-o-korupciji/lti> .

⁶³ <https://ogp.rs/vesti/povecana-transparentnost-gradova-i-opstina-u-srbiji/>

⁶⁴ In coordination with the Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Government, the CSO Consortium announced and, based on the Public Invitation, selected five LSGs that will be supported in developing local action plans for open government, including Novi Pazar, Vlasotince, Bela Palanka, Lapovo and Sombor. More information is available at <https://ogp.rs/sprovođenje-pou-u-lokalnim-sredinama/odabrano-5-jls-koje-ce-izradivati-lokalne-akcione-planove-pou-2019-2020/> .

⁶⁵ <https://ogp.rs/sprovođenje-pou-u-lokalnim-sredinama/grad-novi-pazar-usvojio-je-lap-pou/>

⁶⁶ <https://ogp.rs/sprovođenje-pou-u-lokalnim-sredinama/korak-ka-boljoj-upravi-u-vlasotincu/>

⁶⁷ <https://ogp.rs/sprovođenje-pou-u-lokalnim-sredinama/lap-za-lapovo-novi-sajt-i-e-salter/>

and adopted its own Action Plan, as the first local self-government to do so in Serbia and the only one in the region.⁶⁸

In the period ranging from March 11 to 15, 2019, the **OGP Week in the Republic of Serbia** was honored by events at the national and local level. As part of marking the beginning of the development of local action plans, but also for the purpose of promoting OGP at the local level, round tables were held on March 11 in Vlasotince and Lapovo and on March 12 in Sombor, to initiate a dialogue between citizens, civil society, the business sector and local governments and encourage activities that respond to the real needs of citizens in the areas covered by the Partnership.⁶⁹

The final event marking the OGP Week was a national conference held on March 15, 2019, entitled the **Partnership for Open Government in Serbia – Openness in the service of trust**, which the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government (hereinafter: MPALSG) realized in cooperation with the OSCE Mission to Serbia and with the support of the project Support for Better Communication and Understanding of Public Administration Reform. In the introductory part of the Conference, which was attended by representatives of state bodies, local self-governments and the civil sector from all over Serbia, the participants were addressed by the Prime Minister, the Minister of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, the Head of the EU Delegation to Serbia, the Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, and the Acting UNDP Resident Representative in Serbia.⁷⁰ After the introductory speeches, a panel was held in which representatives of state bodies, the donor community and the members of the civil society presented their experiences related to participation in national OGP activities, and examples of good practice at the local level were presented by local governments that decided to develop local action plans for an open government. The final part of the Conference included work in small groups that were dedicated to the discussion regarding the situation and ways to improve the principles of open government in the Republic of Serbia and bring the value of OGP closer to the citizens.

The delegation of the Republic of Serbia participated in the **Global OGP Summit** in Canada from May 29 to May 31, 2019. Within the summit, at the panel *Exchange of Experiences with Colleagues – on the joint development of AP*, the representative of the MPALSG presented the so-called bilateral meetings, one of the forms of cooperation between state administration bodies and CSOs, which has proven to be very effective when it comes to developing and defining specific commitments. In addition, a representative of the CSO-member of the National Working Group participated in the panel called *OGP in the Eastern Partnership countries and the Western Balkans: Raising Ambition*, where she spoke about the participation in OGP from a civil society perspective and the challenges that exist in this process.

In October 2019, with the support of the project of German-Serbian development cooperation "Support to Public Administration Reform in Serbia," implemented by GIZ, a delegation of the Government of the Republic of Serbia paid a **study visit to Croatian government institutions** to exchange experiences and knowledge regarding citizen participation in policy making. Within the multiple day visit, various aspects and ways of civic participation were discussed, and one of the sessions was dedicated to the results and the current

⁶⁸ See: Report on the implementation of the Action Plan for 2018-2020, for the first six months, p. 27-28, <https://www.gradjanske.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Izve%C5%A1taj-o-pracenju-sprovo%C4%91enja-AP-POU-2018-20.pdf> .

⁶⁹ <https://bit.ly/2HToISv>

⁷⁰ <http://mduls.gov.rs/saopstenja/veca-otvorenost-vece-poverenje-gradjana-u-drzavu/>

stage of Action Plans' implementation in Serbia and Croatia, which was discussed by national contact persons of both countries.

In order to inform the public about OGP activities fully and in a timely manner, the consortium of CSOs that received the support of the OGP donor fund to support the third cycle of the Action Plan took over the maintenance of the national OGP platform in the Republic of Serbia www.ogp.rs.

In coordination with the MPALSG, a special, regularly updated section of this platform dedicated to the Action Plan for the implementation of OGP in the Republic of Serbia for 2018-2020⁷¹ has been established, one which enables monitoring the process of development and implementation of this document, and represents the Open Government Repository, in accordance with the standards of the OGP.

III. THE ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The preparation of this action plan began in January 2020 with the implementation of the process of selecting CSO representatives to the Special Inter-Ministerial Working Group for drafting the fourth Action Plan from 2020 to 2022 and the implementation of the Republic of Serbia's participation in the Open Government Partnership initiative (hereinafter: Working Group). In accordance with the developed practice during the previous cycles, **CSO representatives were selected through a transparent and inclusive procedure** based on a public call implemented by the MPALSG in cooperation with the OCCS.

The public call to all interested CSOs was published in January 2020 on the websites of the MPALSG⁷² and OCCS⁷³ and the profiles of these bodies on social networks, while OCCS additionally sent public call via its mailing list to all CSOs on the list.

An integral part of the public call, among other relevant information, was the criteria set in order to include in the work of the Working Group and the development of the Action Plan CSOs that deal with project experience and expertise in various areas within the OGP values, such as: availability of data, access to information of public importance, media and information, fiscal transparency, public advocacy and policies, strengthening the rule of law and spreading civic awareness, fight against corruption, development of new technologies and information exchange innovations, improvement of public services and including citizens in decision-making processes, open data, public administration reform, OGP. Also, the existence of appropriate criteria was necessary in order to ensure efficiency in the operation of the Working Group, bearing in mind that over 34,500 associations and over 900 endowments and foundations⁷⁴ operating in various fields are registered in the Republic of Serbia. On the other hand, in order to encourage wider participation of civil society and expand the circle of potential members of the Working Group from the ranks of CSOs, these criteria have been loosened compared to previous cycles of action plans. So, the criteria were defined to include minimum

⁷¹ <https://ogp.rs/akcioni-plan-2018-2020/>

⁷² <http://mduls.gov.rs/obavestjenja/partnerstvo-za-otvorenu-upravu-javni-poziv-za-ocd-za-ucesce-u-radnoj-grupi-za-izradu-akcionog-plana-2020-2022-godine/?script=cir>

⁷³ <https://civilnodrustvo.gov.rs/poziv/partnerstvo-za-otvorenu-upravu:-javni-poziv-za-u%C4%8De%C5%A1%C4%87e-u-radnoj-grupi-za-izradu-akcionog-plana-20202022-godine.39.html?invitationId=681>

⁷⁴Data on the number of associations, endowments and foundations were downloaded from the website of the Business Registers Agency, on November 23, 2020.

standards showing CSO activity in areas related to OGP values. In this direction, the number of required years of CSO existence has been reduced, from at least three years in the previous cycle, to at least one year. In addition, previous experience in the work of Working Groups and other working and advisory bodies formed by public administration bodies and membership in a network or other association of CSOs have become desirable instead of eliminatory criteria that are further evaluated, but applications are not rejected due to non-compliance, as was the case in earlier cycles. Also, in order to encourage greater involvement of CSOs based outside the capital and introduce a local perspective that is the closest to citizens in recognizing problems and taking measures via the Action Plan, additional items were introduced for CSOs outside Belgrade, as a measure of affirmative action in this direction. Finally, the application process was simplified, and it took place electronically in its entirety, as opposed to the previous submission of documentation by regular post. Insight into the evidence of meeting the criteria for which there are official records (such as the decision on entry in the relevant register or statute, or the founding act of CSOs) was done *ex officio* by the selection commission, instead of being submitted by applicants, as was the case during previous cycles.

The public call was opened in the period ranging from January 30 to February 14, 2020. After the deadlines for the submission of applications, completion of the selection procedure and objections expired, in March 2020, the commission composed of representatives of OCCS and the MPALSG made the, , the Decision on the Proposal of the CSOs for Membership in the Working Group, proposing to the Minister of Public Administration and Local Self-Government the appointment of representatives of all CSOs that have applied during the public call. The final decision on the CSO proposal for membership in the Working Group was published on internet presentations belonging to the MPALSG⁷⁵ and OCCS,⁷⁶ and delivered to the participants of the public call.

Representatives of nine CSOs were selected as members of the Working Group (a total of 18 members and deputy members), as follows: Belgrade Open School (Belgrade), BIRN Serbia (Belgrade), Media and Reform Center (Nis), Monitor (Novi Pazar), National Coalition for Decentralization (Niš), Partners for Democratic Change Serbia (Belgrade), Association of Citizens for Democracy and Civic Education "Civic Initiatives" (Belgrade), Foundation Center for Democracy (Belgrade), Center for Policy Research "Argument" (Prijepolje). In this way, the number of CSO representatives in the Working Group increased compared to their presence during the drafting of the previous Action Plan (from six to nine), of which almost half are CSO representatives outside the capital (four out of nine and 45%, respectively).

Due to the circumstances caused by the COVID-19 virus and adjustment to the overall situation, both in terms of the functioning of administrative bodies and in terms of prevention measures, the process of preparing the Action Plan continued in May 2020 with the establishment of a Special Inter-Ministerial Working Group for the development of the fourth Action Plan for 2020-2022, and the realization of the Republic of Serbia's participation in the Open Government Partnership initiative.⁷⁷ The Working Group's tasks include: the preparation of the Draft Action Plan for the implementation of the Open Government Partnership initiative in the Republic of Serbia from 2020 to 2022, the implementation of the procedure of consultations with civil society regarding the Draft Action Plan, monitoring the implementation

⁷⁵ <http://mduls.gov.rs/obavestjenja/partnerstvo-za-otvorenu-upravu-izabrane-ocd-u-radnu-grupu-za-izradu-novog-akcionog-plana/?script=cir>

⁷⁶ <https://bit.ly/34PX7cw>

⁷⁷ Decision number: 021-02-80 / 2020-06 of 5 May 2020, available at <http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/RE%C5%A0ENJE-RG-OGP-2020-2022..pdf> .

of activities defined by the Action Plan, proposing amendments to the Action Plan, the preparation of interim and final reports on the implementation of activities from the Action Plan.

The Working Group consists of a total of 43 members and the same number of deputy members, representatives of several ministries, special organizations, government services, independent bodies, the Strategic Project Implementation Unit – IT and eGovernment – the Prime Minister’s Office, the National Assembly of Serbia, the Serbian Chamber of Commerce, the donor community, five local self-government units and city municipalities (the cities of Sombor, Novi Pazar, Šabac, Vlasotince municipality and Vračar city municipality) and nine CSOs selected through the previously described procedure.

When it comes to the composition of the Working Group, it is important to note that during its formation, **continuity was largely achieved in relation to the composition of the working group from the previous cycle of drafting the Action Plan**, primarily in terms of state administration bodies involved. Changes in membership occurred mainly due to personnel changes in certain bodies. Also, the trend of representation of local self-governments continued and, as previously mentioned, the number of representatives from the ranks of CSOs increased, four of whom participated in the development of the previous Action Plan.

The first meeting of the Working Group was held on May 19, 2020, via the *Zoom platform*, where the initiative of the OGP and the methodology of drafting the Action Plan were presented, i.e. the agreements were reached on further steps in drafting it. In that sense, having in mind the circumstances caused by the COVID-19 virus, it was agreed that further work should take place via *online* meetings and electronic communication, starting with the implementation of consultations with citizens and civil society in order to collect proposals for commitments. Also, the Rules of Procedure of the Working Group⁷⁸ were discussed and adopted, which, in addition to the procedures for operations and decision-making, contains the rules of handover of membership in the case of personnel changes, in order to continue the work of the Working Group. For the purpose of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Action Plan for 2018-2020, at the meeting, the results of the implementation of obligations from this action plan were considered, and the representatives of the institutions responsible for their implementation discussed the topic.⁷⁹

In accordance with the principles of the OGP, and in order to ensure the widest possible consultation process and involvement of all interested CSOs at the very beginning of the Action Plan, when determining the priorities and commitments to be included in the planned document, the MPALSG and the OCCS organized **a series of consultative meetings**. A public call for these meetings, with accompanying instructions and forms,⁸⁰ was published on June 5, 2020 on the MPALSG⁸¹ and OCCS⁸² websites, 14 days before the first consultations. Also, those interested could send written proposals of commitments on the prescribed form, which was published within the Public Call, until June 25, 2020. In order for the discussion to be as efficient as possible and with enough time for all participants to present their proposals, the

⁷⁸ The Rules of Procedure of the Working Group are available at <http://mduls.gov.rs/uprava-po-meri-svih-nas/strateska-dokumenta/>.

⁷⁹ Minutes from the first meeting of the Working Group is available at <http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/Zapisnik-sa-1.-sastanka-RG-OGP-final.docx?script=lat>.

⁸⁰ Within the Public Call, the following were published: Instructions for the development of the Action Plan, Guide to the values of the OGP, Report of the IRM on the design of the Action Plan for 2018-2020. years, as well as forms for defining proposals for obligations and submitting written proposals

⁸¹ <http://mduls.gov.rs/obavestjenja/partnerstvo-za-otvorenu-upravu-konsultativni-sastanci-u-izradi-novog-akcionog-plana/>

⁸² <https://bit.ly/30XuOb5>

meetings were organized by topics (areas) that correspond to the basic values of the OGP. In addition, in order to identify the needs and encourage the participation of CSOs dealing with sector public policies in the field of health, environment, culture, media, education and youth, an important novelty in this cycle of the Action Plan is the organization of special consultative meetings on these topics.

In accordance with that, **a total of eight consultative meetings were held with the participation of over 70 representatives** of state administration and local self-government bodies – members of the Special Working Group, representatives of the donor community in Serbia, and representatives of civil society. Due to the epidemiological situation, all meetings were held online, via the *Zoom platform*, according to the following schedule:

- ✓ June 19, 2020, 11:30-13:00 – Topic: Public Participation in decision making processes
- ✓ June 19, 2020, 14:00-15: 30 – Topic: Culture and media
- ✓ June 22, 2020, 11: 30-13: 00 – Topic: Access to information, open data and data reuse
- ✓ June 22, 2020, 14:00-15: 30 – Topic: Health and the environment
- ✓ June 23, 2020, 11:30-13: 00 – Topic: Public Services
- ✓ June 23, 2020, 14:00-15: 30 – Topic: Education and Youth Policy
- ✓ June 24, 2020, 11:30-13: 00 – Topic: Fiscal Transparency
- ✓ June 24, 2020, 14:00-15: 30 – Topic: Government integrity (responsibility)

In the introductory part of all meetings, the participants were introduced to the initiative of the OGP, its values, the way in which action plans and structures are developed, IRM and all other facts relevant to the development of the Action Plan. Also, the Action Plan implementation results for 2018-2020 are briefly presented, in areas related to the specific topic of the meeting, in order to inform participants about what has already been achieved through participation in the OGP in a specific area, as well as to ensure the necessary continuity. After this introductory part, the participants presented, discussed and defined proposals for commitments that could be included in the fourth Action Plan.

As a result of the Working Group and the representatives of the CSO's joint effort, during the consultation process, a total of 23 commitment were proposed, both through consultative meetings and in writing, on the prescribed form published in the Public Call. The commitment are categorized according to the following areas (topics): Public Participation, Access to Information, Open Data and Data Reuse, Government Integrity, Fiscal Transparency and Public Services.

The report on the conducted consultations, which includes all the collected proposals and conclusions from the consultative meetings, was published on the website of the MPALSG's website.⁸³

The further process of drafting the Action Plan took place through meetings of the Working Group, both with all contributors, and in a small circle of participants related to a specific proposal of commitments, as well as through constant electronic communication with proposers and state administration bodies that should be responsible for their implementation.

⁸³ The report from consultative meetings is available at <http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/Izve%C5%A1taj-sa-konsultativnih-sastanaka-sa-OCD-AP-OGP-2020-2022-FINAL.docx?script=lat> .

Accordingly, all all proposed commitments were first presented and discussed at the **Second**⁸⁴ and **Third Meeting of the Working Group**⁸⁵ with all members, and then the work took place through bilateral meetings, which were dedicated to more detailed consideration and defining individual commitments, i.e. through electronic communication with proposers and the bodies potentially responsible for their implementation. Having in mind the intensive work on the proposed commitments in the period between the Third and Fourth Meeting of the Working Group and with the purpose of informing all members of the Working Group in a timely manner, the **Information on Activities Undertaken Between Working Group Meetings**⁸⁶ was drafted and delivered to all Working Group members as a part of the preparation for the Fourth Meeting of the Working Group. An integral part of this information consists of all proposed commitments, as well as written explanations of the competent authorities in relation to those commitments that cannot be realized through the Action Plan that is being prepared.

After the period in which the work on the proposed commitments took place through bilateral meetings, the **Fourth Meeting of the Working Group**⁸⁷ was held in its full composition, at which all proposals were once again considered and it was decided to include specific commitments in the Action Plan. In order to further coordinate the positions within the Working Group regarding certain commitments, the **Fifth Meeting of the Working Group**⁸⁸ was convened and held, at which a final decision was made on the specific commitments which will be included in the Draft Action Plan.

Overall, within the process of preparing the Action Plan for 2020-2022, the Working Group held **five meetings in full composition**: on May 19, August 11, August 14, November 18, and November 30. In addition, within the practice of organizing **meetings with a narrowed down number of the Working Group members (bilateral meetings)**, **seven such meetings** were held on the occasion of individual proposals of commitments: three with representatives of the Ministry of Environmental Protection: on August 28,⁸⁹ September 15⁹⁰ and November 19; one with representatives of the Ministry of Culture and Information, on September 3;⁹¹ one with a representative of the Education Team in the Prime Minister's Office, on September 23;⁹²

⁸⁴ Minutes of the Second meeting of the Working Group is available at <http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/Zapisnik-sa-2.-sastanka-RG-AP-OGP-2020-2022..docx?script=lat> .

⁸⁵ Minutes of the Third meeting of the Working Group is available at <http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/Zapisnik-sa-3.-sastanka-RG-AP-OGP-2020-2022.-1.docx?script=lat> .

⁸⁶ Information on the activities undertaken between the meetings of the Working Group is available at <http://mduls.gov.rs/uprava-po-meri-svih-nas/strateska-dokumenta/> .

⁸⁷ Minutes of the Fourth meeting of the Working Group is available at <http://mduls.gov.rs/uprava-po-meri-svih-nas/strateska-dokumenta/> .

⁸⁸ Minutes of the Fifth meeting of the Working Group is available at <http://mduls.gov.rs/uprava-po-meri-svih-nas/strateska-dokumenta/> .

⁸⁹ Minutes of the meeting is available at <http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/Zapisnik-sa-sastanka-u%C5%BEeg-sastava-Posebne-radne-grupe-obaveza-11-28.8..docx?script=lat> .

⁹⁰ Minutes of the meeting is available at <http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/Zapisnik-sa-sastanka-u%C5%BEeg-sastava-Posebne-radne-grupe-obaveza-6-15.9.....pdf> .

⁹¹ Minutes of the meeting is available at <http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/Zapisnik-sa-sastanka-u%C5%BEeg-sastava-Posebne-radne-grupe-obaveze-17.-i-18...-1.docx?script=lat> .

⁹² Minutes of the meeting is available at <http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/Zapisnik-sa-sastanka-u%C5%BEeg-sastava-Posebne-radne-grupe-obaveza-13.-23.....docx?script=lat> .

one with representatives of the Environmental Protection Agency on September 30;⁹³ and one with SCTM representatives, on October 6.⁹⁴

One of the lessons learned and significant progress compared to previous cycles of Action Plans is **the inclusion of CSOs that submitted proposals of commitments during the consultation process, which are not formally members of the Working Group, in the further process of drafting the Action Plan.** Namely, three proposers of the commitments from the ranks of civil society – the Association of Lawyers AEPA, the Young Researchers of Serbia and the Team 42 - were duly invited to the meetings of the Working Group at which the proposals were discussed, while representatives of the Association of Lawyers AEPA and the Young Researchers of Serbia participated in the meetings of the narrower composition of the Working Group, where their proposals were discussed in more detail with the competent state administration bodies.⁹⁵

Proposed commitments were discussed in detail at the Working Group, both with all members and with narrowed down groups. A number of CSO proposals were included in the Draft Action Plan in their original form, the proposer and the competent authority cooperated to modify a number of them, while for certain proposals were concluded, with the statement of reasons, that they could not be implemented within this Action Plan. The entire process of preparing the Draft Action Plan was open to the public and transparent, and its course, including the definition of the commitments themselves, could be monitored through the regular publication of all minutes of the Working Group meetings.⁹⁶

In general, having in mind the entire process of preparing the Action Plan, the Working Group considered the current way of working and creating the commitments that make up the Action Plan. In that sense, one of the lessons learned for the further continuation of cycle but also the following cycles, as well as more efficient participation of the Republic of Serbia in the OGP, implies the need to **consider in detail the effects of the Working Group as a multi-stakeholder forum.** Accordingly, it is particularly important to review and improve the format, mandate and composition of the current forum, with particular emphasis on greater involvement of high-level state administration decision-makers. In this regard, the IRM key recommendation No. 1 was also considered.

The Action Plan Draft was published on MPALSG's web presentation, and on the national OGP platform⁹⁷ on December 1, 2020, with participate call for two-week public consultation. After the consultations, and in accordance with the provisions of the Government's Rules of Procedure, the opinions of the competent state administration bodies were collected on the Draft Conclusion, of which the Action Plan is an integral part, and it was submitted to the Government to consider and make a decision.

⁹³ Minutes of the meeting is available at <http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/Zapisnik-sa-sastanka-u%C5%BEeg-sastava-Posebne-radne-grupe-obeveza-11-SEPA....docx?script=lat> .

⁹⁴ Minutes of the meeting is available at <http://mduls.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/Zapisnik-sa-sastanka-u%C5%BEeg-sastava-Posebne-radne-grupe-obeveza-11-SKGO-6.10..docx?script=lat> .

⁹⁵ In addition to these CSO, at the meeting of the incomplete group of participants of the Working Group with the representatives of the Ministry of Environmental Protection on the topic of improving the participation of citizens in environmental decision-making processes, three more CSOs participated - Environmental Engineers, Right to Water and CEKOR.

⁹⁶ Minutes of all meetings of the Working Group are available at <http://mduls.gov.rs/uprava-po-meri-svih-nas/strateska-dokumenta/> .

⁹⁷ <https://ogp.rs/vesti/javne-konsultacije-u-okviru-procesa-izrade-akcionog-plana-za-sprovođenje-inicijative-partnerstvo-za-otvorenu-upravu-u-republici-srbiji-za-period-2020-2022-godine/>

In addition to the mentioned activities that were directly aimed at drafting the Action Plan, during the period of its preparation other steps were taken within the implementation of the OGP in the Republic of Serbia, primarily in the form of promotion of previously achieved results, the exchange of experiences with other participating countries, and representing the process of drafting the new Action Plan.

At the **Open Government Conference in Bosnia and Herzegovina**, held in February 2020 in Sarajevo, a representative of the MPALSG presented to participants from the region the experiences and results the Republic of Serbia achieved in terms of reforms successfully implemented as a part of the Partnership.

Organized by the project aiming to support the visibility and communication of the public administration reform, on March 5, 2020, a “**media briefing**” was held on the topic of public participation in the creation of public policies. At the event in question, the representative of the MPALSG presented the results of the Republic of Serbia's participation in the OGP and the country's experience in cooperation with civil society, and pointed out the plans related to the adoption of the new Action Plan for 2020-2022.⁹⁸

Representatives of the MPALSG participated in the **Regional Online Meeting of National OGP Contact Points in the Western Balkans** held on October 15-16, 2020 and organized by the *Regional School for Public Administration (RESPA)*. At the meeting itself, experiences in the ongoing processes of developing action plans in the region were exchanged, along with the ways in which, in general, these processes could be further improved in accordance with the standards of the OGP. Also, potential closer forms of cooperation between countries in the region within the OGP were discussed.

Therefore, having in mind the previously described process of preparing the Action Plan, it can be concluded that the Republic of Serbia has met three key OGP standards for participation and co-creation during the drafting of the Action Plan⁹⁹ with regard to the following:

- **The multi-stakeholder forum in the form of a Working Group existed and functioned through regular meetings** during the process of preparing the Action Plan. As mentioned earlier, a total of 12 Working Group meetings were held - five in full and seven in short.
- The multi-stakeholder forum in the form of a Working Group included government actors (representatives of state administration bodies, the Prime Minister's Office and local self-government units) and non-governmental actors (nine CSOs selected via the previously described, transparent procedure).
- **The CSO proposals received feedback from the competent authorities**, either in the form of a written statement or orally, at the meetings of the Working Group. Feedback is available through the minutes of the Working Group meetings which are regularly published on the website of the MPALSG.

IIIa. Implementation of the recommendations of the Independent Reporting Mechanism

⁹⁸ <https://bit.ly/3jSe5MJ>

⁹⁹ See more: OGP Handbook Rules + Guidance for Participants, p. 22, available at <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/ogp-handbook-rules-and-guidance-for-participants-2020/>.

The Independent Reporting Mechanism has sent two sets of recommendations within the Report on the design of the previous Action Plan for 2018-2020,¹⁰⁰ relating to both the drafting process and the content of the Action Plan, highlighting five key recommendations that should be given special attention in the next cycle.

All key recommendations have been considered in detail and taken into account, and the following actions have been taken in relation to them:

Key Recommendation 1. Ensure high-level political support to the national OGP process.

The MPALSG, as a state administration body that coordinates the participation of the Republic of Serbia in the OGP and whose Minister chairs the **Public Administration Reform Council**, took this recommendation into account, aiming to implement it during this Action Plan cycle. In that sense, the plan was to first direct the Information on the End-Of-Term Self-Assessment Report on the previous Action Plan for 2018-2020 to the Council, and then to the members of the Council to get acquainted with the development of a new action plan at one of the meetings.

However, the implementation of the mentioned activities did not take place due to the fact that the Council held one meeting during 2020, having in mind the circumstances related to COVID-19 and the elections that were held, at a time when the mentioned documents related to OGP were not yet made.

In that sense, considering that in the next period it is necessary to constitute a new convocation of the Council due to the formation of the new Government of the Republic of Serbia, and that the adoption of a new Action Plan for the implementation of OGP for 2020-2022 is expected by the end of the year, as well as the finalization of the End-Of-Term Self-Assessment Report- on the previous action plan, these documents will be presented to the new convocation of the Council at one of its meetings.

In addition to the above-mentioned information, it should be noted that a representative of the Prime Minister's Office is involved in the work of the Working Group, and that one of the commitment from the Action Plan – Commitment no. 7 – was created in close cooperation with the Prime Minister's Office, which indicates understanding and commitment to OGP values exists at the very center of the Government.

Key Recommendation 2. Diversify lead implementing agencies and convince key bodies with veto power over important commitments to proactively participate in the deliberations of the Working Group.

Having in mind the commitments included in the Action Plan and the state administration bodies responsible for their implementation, it is evident that **progress has been made in relation to the previous OGP cycle in terms of the variety of responsible institutions**. Unlike the previous Action Plan, when MPALSG and OCCS were responsible for the implementation of more than half of the commitments, this cycle has established a better balance, so that the number of commitments is more evenly distributed among the seven state administration bodies – The Ministry of Culture and Information, the Ministry of Environmental Protection, the MPALSG and the Office for Information Technologies and

¹⁰⁰ The IRM report is available at https://ogp.rs/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Serbia_IRM_AP3_DesignReport_for-public-comment-SER.pdf.

eGovernment are responsible for two commitments each, while the National Academy of Public Administration, Public Policy Secretariat and the General Secretariat of the Government, are responsible for implementing one commitment each, and finally, in the case of one commitment, there is a joint responsibility of several mentioned bodies.

It is especially important to emphasize that the **General Secretariat of the Government** (which participates in two commitments as a lead implementation agency) and the **Republic Secretariat for Legislation** (although none of the commitments drafts was within the competence of this body) actively participated in the process of reviewing draft commitments and drafting the Action Plan, which is particularly important given their position as key bodies at the very core of the Government.

A significant number of Working Group meetings in a narrower composition held on the occasion of certain individual commitments, indicates that there was a tendency to reach a consensus.

Key Recommendation 3. Increase the number of commitments primarily targeting public accountability, direct civic engagement, and citizen-relevant public services.

Having in mind the previous recommendation for the part related to increasing the number of commitments concerning the **direct involvement of citizens**, the Action Plan as Commitment no. 3 includes the development of the eParticipation portal, which significantly improves the existing eGovernment portal and enables direct citizen participation in preparing regulations and public policy documents electronically. In addition, Commitment no.4 addresses the very important issue of citizen participation in the management of protected areas, which provides for the introduction of new mechanisms for civic participation in environmental protection. Finally, Commitment no. 12 envisages the improvement of citizen participation in defining priorities when announcing a competition for the allocation of funds intended for co-financing media content.

When it comes to the increasing number of commitments in the area of **public services that involve citizens directly**, the Action Plan draft includes Commitment no. 5 which will enable citizens to electronically submit requests for any changes they want made, and help them receive decisions on the changes in the voter register. Commitment no. 6 will simplify administrative procedures for citizens, while Commitment no. 7 includes the development of a national platform through which citizens will be able to directly report cases of peer violence.

When it comes to the area of **public accountability**, although the Action plan does not contain any commitment directly related to this issue, it should be noted that elements of public accountability are found in several commitments that mostly belong to other areas (e.g. Commitment no. 5 or Commitment no. 7). In addition, it should be taken into account that a revised Action Plan for Chapter 23 was adopted earlier in the year, and that a new Public Administration Reform Strategy was developed at the same time as this action plan, one of the goals of which is to improve management accountability. As a result, certain commitments that could be found in this Action Plan are included as activities in the mentioned documents.

Key Recommendation 4. Include measures related to implementation and enforcement of new legal solutions, in addition to legislative changes.

Based on the above-mentioned recommendation, the Action Plan includes Commitment no. 2, which implies the establishment of systematic monitoring and quality control of citizen participation in consultations and public debates. Together with the establishment and the use of the eParticipation portal from Commitment no. 3, the mechanisms provided by this

commitment will directly address the **implementation of regulations governing the conduct of consultations and public debates.**

Also, the implementation of Commitment no.11 will enable the monitoring of the **application of regulations governing the provision of financial support to media projects**, both by the bodies responsible for monitoring these regulations, and by the interested members of the public.

Key recommendation 5: Focus on reusing open data.

Although the Action Plan does not contain specific commitments that imply the reuse of open data, it is important to point out that it contains several obligations that imply the publication of data in an open format (e.g. commitments no. 7, 8, 10 and 11).

In addition, in June 2020, **the eGovernment Development Program in the Republic of Serbia for 2020-2022** was adopted, together with an Action Plan for its implementation, which stipulates very important and specific measures to further improve the data opening initiative, as well as their reuse. Thus, within **Special Objective 4: Open Data in Public Administration**, there is a measure called the **Support for the Use of Open Data**, which implies the organization of activities such as open data challenges through which solutions based on the use of open data of public authorities will be developed.

Having in mind the previous information, as well as the results presented in the earlier part of the Action Plan, the orientation of the Republic of Serbia in the direction of further development and improvement in this area can be seen.

IV. COMMITMENTS

Commitment 1: Integrating the participation of CSOs in decision-making and anti-discrimination processes as horizontal concerns in the professional development programs of civil servants and monitoring their implementation	
Commitment Start and End Date In progress – II quarter of 2022	
Lead implementing agency/actor	National Academy of Public Administration
Commitment Description	
What is the public problem that the commitment will address?	The European Commission's Progress Report on Serbia for 2019 states that the inclusiveness and transparency of the reform process, especially on issues related to EU accession, must be improved as a priority issue, and public consultations on policies and legislation should be more than a formality. In the same sense, it is pointed out that the amendments to the Law on Public Administration, the Law on Local Self-Government and the Law on Planning System of the Republic of Serbia introduced special provisions aimed at improving public participation in public policy development, but it is stated that the relationship between the Government and CSOs is still marked by fragmented cooperation and inadequate response of the authorities to contributions and comments on

	<p>draft laws submitted by civil society in the consultative process. The SIGMA Monitoring Report for 2019 pays significant attention to professional development in public administration, giving an overall assessment of indicators in this area 3 out of possible 5. In addition, the project document of the current IPA project to support the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) in professional development in public management, envisages a certain range of issues that have the character of horizontal, and are not sufficiently represented in training programs. Thus, anti-discrimination, gender equality and civil society participation have been identified as key issues that need to be integrated into the training programs of civil servants.</p> <p>These are horizontal issues that may arise independently of the conducted specialization of tasks or departmentalization of certain functions belonging to administrative bodies, related to meta-topics, often related to the general development of public administration, its modernization or the improvement of administrative culture.</p> <p>Having in mind the findings from the mentioned documents, there is an evident need for additional improvement of the situation in the field of the participation of CSO in decision-making processes and anti-discrimination policy in the Republic of Serbia. One of the possible mechanisms in this direction includes the improvement of the existing way of professional development of civil servants in the mentioned thematic units through the recognition and intensification of mastering of knowledge and skills in the mentioned areas.</p> <p>As a first step in this direction, during 2020, the identification of training programs was carried out in which individual horizontal concerns will be implemented and the issue will be shaped and adjusted as thematic units, within individual training programs. In this way, the horizontal concern should be addressed in different ways in several different individual training sessions, from relevant program areas.</p>
<p>What is the commitment?</p>	<p>The commitment implies the introduction of CSO participation and anti-discrimination as horizontal issues in the civil servants' professional development programs, as well as monitoring their implementation.</p> <p>The general goal is to raise awareness and improve the knowledge and skills of civil servants in order to achieve better cooperation with civil society and implement anti-discrimination policies within their areas of work.</p>
<p>How will the commitment contribute to solving the public problem?</p>	<p>As part of preparing proposals for general training programs and training programs for managers for 2021, the integration of identified horizontal issues will be integrated within the previously identified individual training programs, which will significantly expand the number of training sessions in which these issues are addressed, but also the number of civil</p>

	<p>servants whose knowledge and skills will be improved in relation to CSO participation and anti-discrimination.</p> <p>In order to ensure the quality of training, the activity of strengthening the capacity of the implementators of training programs with the development of horizontal concerns is planned. It refers to the process of providing support to participants in the form of preparation and distribution of various instructional materials, as well as other forms of support in accordance with the identified participant needs.</p> <p>Monitoring the implementation of training programs in which horizontal issues are integrated will take place through the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data obtained from evaluation questionnaires filled out by participants at the end of each training, as well as reports filled out by trainers and coordinators. Within the annual evaluation of NAPA trainings, a special part will refer to the effects of trainings improved by elaborating horizontal issues.</p>	
<p>Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?</p>	<p>Raising the capacity of civil servants to understand the role, potential and possible ways of cooperating with CSOs in the areas in which they operate increases their willingness and openness to cooperate with the civil sector and citizens in general. In this way, cooperation and exchange of information are encouraged, so it can be concluded that the commitment is relevant in relation to the participation of citizens and CSOs in decision-making processes, as well as in relation to the openness and transparency of administrative bodies.</p> <p>At the same time, additional professional training in the field of anti-discrimination empowers civil servants to treat all citizens equally, without prejudice, both in the decision-making processes in which citizens participate and in other areas of service delivery by the state administration they represent.</p>	
<p>Additional information</p>	<p>The realization of the commitment will be enabled by the NAPA budget funds, as well as with the support of the EU project "Support to the National Academy of Public Administration in the Professional Development of Public Administration."</p>	
<p>Milestone Activity with a verifiable deliverable</p>	<p>Start date:</p>	<p>End date:</p>
<p>1. Preparation of proposals for general training programs and training programs for managers for 2021, which are supplemented by identified horizontal concerns within the identified individual training programs</p>	<p>In progress</p>	<p>I quarter of 2021</p>
<p>2. Adoption of general training programs and training programs for managers for 2021, which</p>	<p>I quarter of 2021</p>	<p>I quarter of 2021</p>

include recognized horizontal concerns within the identified individual training programs		
3. Improving producer's capacities for the implementation of training programs improved by elaborating horizontal concerns	I quarter of 2021.	I quarter of 2021
4. Monitoring the implementation of training programs within which horizontal concerns are integrated	II quarter of 2021	II quarter of 2022
Contact information		
Name of responsible person from implementing agency	Jelena Đorđević	
Title, Department	Senior Advisor, Head of the Training Program Preparation and Development Department, Sector for Preparation of Training Programs and Quality Management	
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Other Actors Involved	State actors involved	
	CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups	

Commitment 2: the Establishment of systemic monitoring and quality control of public participation in the preparation of regulations and public policy documents	
Commitment Start and End Date I quarter of 2022 – II quarter of 2022	
Lead implementing agency/actor	General Secretariat of the Government
Commitment Description	
What is the public problem that the commitment will	The Law on the Planning System of the Republic of Serbia and the Law on Amendments to the Law on Public Administration, adopted in 2018, established the institute of consultations with interested parties when

address?	<p>drafting public policy documents and regulations, which is further specified by bylaws adopted in 2019. In this way, in addition to the previously existing process of public debate during the preparation of draft laws, citizens are enabled to participate in the drafting of regulations and public policy documents through consultations from the earliest phases of drafting said documents.</p> <p>However, in addition to improving the normative conditions for greater citizen participation in these processes, it was noted that, in the current circumstances, it is necessary to establish some kind of systemic monitoring and control over consultations and public debates to improve their quality and ensure a high degree of inclusiveness and transparency. The European Commission called on the state administration bodies "to ensure a centralized quality control function which would regularly monitor the implementation of public consultations in practice."</p> <p>One type of such control was established through the obligatory obtaining of the Public Policy Secretariat (PPS) opinion on the prepared draft of the public policy document, i.e. the proposal or draft regulation, with a report on the conducted analysis of effects, which includes information on conducted consultations and a report on public debate.</p> <p>As the mentioned mechanism, in fact, represents controlling each individual case, it is necessary to provide systematic monitoring of the implementation of consultations and public debates at the level of all state administration bodies, which would enable a comprehensive overview of the way state administration bodies conduct these processes.</p> <p>Also, in addition to this internal monitoring and quality control within the public administration system, it is necessary to provide the interested members of the public with insight and the opportunity to monitor the implementation of these processes by ensuring public availability of information and data on consultations and public debates.</p>
What is the commitment?	<p>The commitment implies the establishment and development of mechanisms for systematic monitoring and control over the quality of public participation in the preparation of regulations and public policy documents through regular annual monitoring and publication of information and data by state administration bodies, starting with data and information for 2021.</p> <p>The expected outcome of the commitment includes the establishment of a systemic mechanism to monitor and control all consultations and public debates.</p> <p>The general purpose of the commitment is to improve the quality of public participation in the drafting of regulations and public policy documents, as well as the transparency of their monitoring by the interested members of the public.</p>

<p>How will the commitment contribute to solving the public problem?</p>	<p>The implementation of the commitment will establish an additional mechanism for quality control of public participation in the preparation of regulations and public policy documents, in addition to the existing one which is reflected in the obligation of state administration bodies to obtain opinions of the PPS when referring the act in question to the Government to make a decision.</p> <p>Based on the established systematic monitoring, the Government will be able to get acquainted with and observe the observed processes and trends that occur and, based on them, possibly take measures to further improve them within its competencies. On the other hand, through the public availability of this information, interested parties and the general public will be able to monitor the implementation of consultations and public debates, which will contribute to improving the transparency of the processes themselves.</p> <p>The commitment will be realized through the presentation of information and data on conducted consultations and public debates within the Annual Report on the work that the Government has done, which will be generated from the database of the eParticipation Portal, as well as from other information bases in accordance with regulations on the planning system and the work of the Government.</p> <p>The establishment of regular and systematic monitoring will be ensured by adequate amendments to the Instructions of the Secretary General, which provide directives and instructions to state administration bodies regarding the submission of attachments for the purposes of preparing the annual report on the work of the Government.</p>
<p>Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?</p>	<p>Encompassing the development of a system for quality control of consultations and public debates, i.e. ensuring control over the implementation of legally set standards, this commitment is relevant in relation to public accountability as a value of OGP.</p> <p>Other than that, since it directly refers to monitoring mechanisms for the participation of the interested public in the development of regulations and public policy documents, the commitment is also relevant in relation to the participation of citizens.</p> <p>Also, considering that the Report on the Work of the Government is a publicly available document, as well as the fact that the information and data provided by this commitment will be an integral part of this document and thus also publicly available, the commitment will contribute to improving access to state administration bodies' information by citizens, as a special Partnership value.</p>
<p>Additional information</p>	<p>The commitment is based on the findings and recommendations of the previously prepared Analysis, which should contribute to the establishment of an appropriate mechanism for quality control of</p>

	consultations, and which was realized with the support of the GIZ project "Support to Public Administration Reform in Serbia."	
Milestone Activity with a verifiable deliverable	Start date:	End date:
1. Amendments to the Instruction for Compiling the Report on the Work of the Government for 2021, which introduces information and data on consultations and public debates as an integral part of the Report	I quarter of 2022	I quarter of 2022
2. Data collection and processing for 2021	I quarter of 2022	II quarter of 2022
3. Adoption of the Report on the Work of the Government for 2021, which contains information and data on the conducted consultations and public debates	II quarter of 2022	II quarter of 2022
4. Publication of the Report on the work of the Government for 2021, which contains information and data on conducted consultations and public debates	II quarter of 2022	II quarter of 2022
Contact information		
Name of responsible person from implementing agency	1. Suzana Otašević 2. Ljubinka Knežević	
Title, Department	1. Head of the Group for Coordination Work, Policy Analysis and Affairs Related to the Process of Integration into the European Union 2. Independent Advisor, Planning, Monitoring and Supervision Group	
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Other Actors Involved	State actors involved	
	CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups	GIZ project "Support of the Public Administration Reform in Serbia"

Commitment 3: Improving opportunities and strengthening the capacity of citizens for electronic participation in consultations and public debates – eParticipation portal	
Date of obligation start and end In progress – II quarter of 2022	
Lead implementing agency/actor	For activities 1 and 2 - Office of Information Technology and eGovernment For activity 3 - General Secretariat of the Government For activity 4 - Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government
Commitment Description	
What is the public problem that the commitment will address?	<p>With the adoption of the Law on the Planning System of the Republic of Serbia and amendments to the Law on Public Administration in 2018, as well as the accompanying bylaws adopted in 2019, consultations were introduced as an additional mechanism for the participation of citizens and other interested members of the public in drafting public policy documents and regulations. In this way, citizens are enabled to participate in the adoption of regulations and public policy documents from the earliest stage of their preparation, in addition to the previously existing opportunity to participate in public debates regarding the draft law.</p> <p>Until the enactment of the mentioned regulations, and in accordance with the provisions of the Law on Public Administration and the Rules of Procedure of the Government, state administration bodies were obliged to publish invitations and reports on public debates in the preparation of draft laws on the national portal eGovernment, while the remaining phases, such as collecting citizens' comments, took place in direct communication between the proposer and the submitter of the comments. With the adoption of new regulations and the introduction of mandatory consultations in the preparation of regulations and public policy documents, but also the mandatory conduct of public debates in the development of public policy documents, the existing eGovernment portal with its functionalities in this domain has become insufficient to adequately address the needs of inclusive and participatory policy making process.</p> <p>In addition to the above-mentioned information, one of the segments of the identified issue has to do with the fact that, in terms of the place of publication of certain content i.e. information related to ongoing public debates and consultations, the existing regulations direct users both to using the proposer's website and to using the current eGovernment portal, resulting in an uneven practice.</p> <p>Finally, the need for additional improvement in this area stems in particular from the circumstances caused by the COVID-19 virus</p>

	<p>pandemic, as a result of which a significant part of activities in the process of adopting regulations and public policy documents will need to be carried out with all prevention measures in place, especially physical distancing.</p>
<p>What is the commitment?</p>	<p>The commitment implies the development and systematic use of the eParticipation portal, as a unique platform for citizen participation and conducting all phases of consultations and public debates in the preparation of regulations and public policy documents, raising the capacities of citizens, CSOs, business sector representatives and other interested members of the public for using this portal, which will be realized within the authority of the Serbian-Korean Information Access Center.</p> <p>Although it can be assessed that certain technical changes to the regulations are needed within this framework, in order for this process to begin as soon as possible, the General Secretariat of the Government will send an appropriate act to all state administration bodies to encourage the systematic use of the eParticipation portal.</p> <p>The expected result consists of the use of the eParticipation portal during the implementation of all regulations and public policy documents' drafting phases, from announcing the start of work, to inviting and conducting public consultations and public debates, to publishing reports on conducted consultations and public debates. Overall, it is expected that the implementation of this commitment will facilitate the availability, transparency and use of all relevant information by participants in public debates and consultations, and thus raise the level of their quality.</p> <p>The general goal of the commitment is to improve the conditions for public participation in the processes of drafting public policy documents and regulations, as well as the transparency of the processes themselves.</p>
<p>How will the commitment contribute to solving the public problem?</p>	<p>The establishment of the new eParticipation portal is in itself a significant contribution to improving public participation in relevant decision-making by the authorized institutions.</p> <p>First of all, its development and systematic use enables the electronic conduct of all consultations and public debates phases, provided by the existing regulations. In this way, on the one hand, preconditions are created for more efficient, economical and transparent adoption of regulations and public policy documents, while, on the other hand, it enables citizens to participate and monitor decision-making processes in a simpler way and with investing less resources.</p> <p>In addition, the implementation of training sessions covering the use of the eParticipation portal intended for citizens, civil society and other interested members of the public, which will be realized within the Serbian-Korean Information Access Center, will encourage their</p>

	<p>participation in decision-making processes while improving the knowledge and skills needed to use this portal.</p> <p>Finally, the commitment holds a special value if we take into account the global situation caused by the COVID-19 virus and the experiences that have shown the need, but also the significant potential that such ways of public participation in decision-making processes bring.</p>	
<p>Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?</p>	<p>The commitment is relevant in relation to three key values of the OGP.</p> <p>First of all, the publication of all relevant information on public debates and consultations and their implementation through a single platform improves access to information held by administrative bodies.</p> <p>At the same time, the realization of the commitment enables the public to participate equally and in a unique way in the process of drafting public policy documents and regulations electronically (online), which significantly improves the core value of the Partnership in the form of citizen participation in decision-making processes.</p> <p>As the commitment refers to the implementation of rules, regulations and mechanisms based on which the representatives of the competent state administration bodies are required to respect the adopted manner of communication and involvement of citizens, the commitment is relevant in relation to public accountability .</p> <p>Finally, taking into account that the implementation of the commitment implies unified use of the eParticipation Portal in all phases of drafting public policy documents or regulations, it is relevant in relation to the use of technologies and innovations, as holds additional value in relation to the three basic values of OGP.</p>	
<p>Additional information</p>	<p>The implementation of the commitment fulfills one of the IRM recommendations which suggested the need for greater use of existing and previously developed mechanisms for the implementation of initiatives that directly engage citizens, such as the official portal for public debates, i.e. eGovernment.</p> <p>The development of the eParticipation Portal was supported within the GIZ project "Support to Public Administration Reform in Serbia."</p>	
<p>Milestone Activity with a verifiable deliverable</p>	<p>Start date:</p>	<p>End date:</p>
<p>1. Established technical possibilities for citizens' electronic participation in consultations and public debates - eParticipation Portal developed</p>	<p>In progress</p>	<p>I quarter of 2021</p>
<p>2. Piloting the eParticipation Portal</p>	<p>I quarter of 2021</p>	<p>I quarter of 2021</p>
<p>3. Encouraging the systematic use of the eParticipation Portal within the state</p>	<p>I quarter of 2021</p>	<p>I quarter of 2021</p>

administration system in all phases of drafting regulations and public policy documents			
4. Training sessions for the use of the eParticipation Portal intended for citizens and other interested members of the public within the Serbian-Korean IT Access Center		II quarter of 2021	II quarter of 2022
Contact information			
Name of responsible person from implementing agency	<p>For activities 1 and 2 - Mihailo Jovanović (Office for Information Technology and eGovernment)</p> <p>For activity 3 - Suzana Otašević, Ljubinka Knežević (General Secretariat of the Government)</p> <p>For activity 4 - Dara Gravara Stojanović (Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government)</p>		
Title, Department	<p>For activities 1 and 2 – director</p> <p>For activity 3 - Suzana Otašević - Head of the Group for coordination, policy analysis and affairs related to the process of integration into the European Union; Ljubinka Knežević - Independent Advisor, Planning, Monitoring and Supervision Group</p> <p>For activity 4 - head of the Department for eGovernment development support</p>		
Email and phone	<p>For activities 1 and 2 - mihailo.jovanovic@ite.gov.rs</p> <p>For activity 3 - suzana.otasevic@gov.rs; ljubinka.knezevic@gov.rs</p> <p>For activity 4. - dara.gravara@mduls.gov.rs</p>		
Other Actors Involved	State actors involved		
	CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups		

Commitment 4: Improve the mechanisms for public involvement in the management processes of protected areas on the territory of the Republic of Serbia	
Commitment Start and End Date I quarter of 2021 – III quarter of 2022	
Lead implementing	Ministry of Environmental Protection

agency/actor	
Commitment Description	
What is the public problem that the commitment will address?	<p>Article 67 of the current Law on Environmental Protection (“Official Gazette of RS”, No. 36/09, 88/10, 91/10 - corr., 14/16 and 95/18 - other law) stipulates that a "legal entity that meets the professional, personnel and organizational requirements for the performance of activities of preservation, improvement, promotion of natural and other values and the sustainable use of the protected area" can run the protected area, in the capacity of a manager. The same article further stipulates that exceptionally "the manager may be an entrepreneur and/or a natural person if it is a protected area of a small surface and a majorly private ownership in real estate", and that "the body responsible for issuing the proclamation act may establish a public enterprise, public institution or company for the purposes of managing one or more protected areas.”</p> <p>In addition to other obligations prescribed by the law, the manager of the protected area is obliged to adopt a management plan for the protected area, on whose proposal they are obliged to obtain the consent of the competent state body, as well as to inform the public about this proposal through public inspection lasting for 30 days, in accordance with Article 54 of the Law.</p> <p>Considering that public companies consist the majority of managers of protected areas in Serbia (PC Srbijašume manages 50.07% of the total area of protected areas, and PC Vojvodinašume is the manager of 17 protected areas), and the increasing pressure from the tourism, agriculture, energy and transport sectors in practice, it is necessary to increase the transparency of the work of public companies that are managers of protected areas, i.e. to improve the existing ways and opportunities for the participation of the local population in the management of these areas.</p>
What is the commitment?	<p>The commitment implies the adoption of a new Law on Environmental Protection, which will introduce new mechanisms for public participation in the management of protected areas and improve opportunities for participation of local people in this process.</p> <p>More precisely, the new law will introduce two new mechanisms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - mandatory public debates for all protected areas in the process of developing management plans, which will further strengthen the existing mechanism of public inspection, - the obligation to form a Beneficiary Council for all protected areas, which would include representatives of local CSOs, by analogy with the solution provided for national parks in the relevant sector regulation.

<p>How will the commitment contribute to solving the public problem?</p>	<p>The envisioned amendments to the Law on Environmental Protection will enable a significantly higher degree of influence of citizens, primarily the local population, in the management of protected areas.</p> <p>At the same time, this encourages a more active role of the public in the management of protected areas in which they live, and allows them to directly participate in giving recommendations and suggestions, but also in the implementation of protection measures.</p> <p>Overall, the management of protected areas will become more transparent with the implementation of this commitment, while the added value is the improvement of trust between the local population and the managers of protected areas, which is of special importance in these processes.</p>	
<p>Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?</p>	<p>The commitment is primarily relevant in relation to public participation as a value of the OGP, bearing in mind that it improves the mechanisms for citizen participation in a specific area, such as the management of public protected areas.</p> <p>Also, the relevance from the aspect of OGP exists in relation to transparency, because the implementation of the commitment will improve access to information that is important for the management of protected areas.</p> <p>Finally, the commitment will also influence managers, primarily public companies entrusted with the management of protected areas, to be more responsible in fulfilling their legal obligations.</p>	
<p>Additional information</p>		
<p>Milestone Activity with a verifiable deliverable</p>	<p>Start date:</p>	<p>End date:</p>
<p>1. Establishment of a Working Group for drafting a new Law on Environmental Protection</p>	<p>I quarter of 2021</p>	<p>III quarter of 2021</p>
<p>2. Preparation of the Draft Law on Environmental Protection</p>	<p>III quarter of 2021</p>	<p>I quarter of 2022</p>
<p>3. Referral to the Government for the adoption of the Draft Law on Environmental Protection, which contains provisions introducing new mechanisms for public participation in the management of protected areas provided by this commitment</p>	<p>II quarter of 2022</p>	<p>III quarter of 2022</p>
<p>Contact information</p>		
<p>Name of responsible person from</p>	<p>Aleksandra Došlić</p>	

implementing agency	
Title, Department	Head of the Department for Protected Areas, Geodiversity and Ecological Network, Sector for Environmental Protection and Climate Change
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Other Actors Involved	State actors involved
	CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups

Commitment 5: Development of e-service for citizens – submitting requests and receiving decisions on changes in the voter register	
Commitment Start and End Date II quarter of 2021 - IV quarter of 2021	
Lead implementing agency/actor	Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government
Commitment Description	
What is the public problem that the commitment will address?	<p>According to the current regulations, citizens submit a request for a change in the Unified Voters' List to the competent municipal or city administration according to the place of residence, i.e. the ministry in charge of administrative affairs when it is responsible for changes in the voter register (from the conclusion of the voter register to 72 hours before election day), by regular mail or in person, at the office of the competent authority. On the other hand, decisions on changes in the voter register are delivered to citizens in the same ways, i.e. by regular mail or in person.</p> <p>Such ways of submitting requests and receiving decisions on changes in the voter register need to be made more efficient, faster and more modern, while spending as little time and resources as possible for citizens.</p>
What is the commitment?	The commitment implies the establishment of a new eService that will enable all registered users of the eGovernment Portal to submit a request for a change in the voter register to the competent authority through their user account, as well as to be provided with a decision on changes in the voter register.

	<p>The realization of this commitment will significantly improve the existing way of performing these activities, with significantly less time and resources, both for citizens and the administration.</p>	
<p>How will the commitment contribute to solving the public problem?</p>	<p>The first step in the implementation of this commitment implies the adoption of the Law on Amendments to the Law on the Seal of State and Other Bodies, which will introduce the electronic seal of the MPALSG, as well as the local self-government units entrusted with updating the voter list. This will enable them to make decisions in the form of an electronic document in the system of the Unified Voters' List in accordance with the provisions of the Law on Electronic Document, Electronic Identification and Trust Services in Electronic Business ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 94/17).</p> <p>The next step involves connecting the eGovernment Portal and the Unified Voters' List system, in order to create a link between these two systems and enable citizens to submit requests for changes in the voter list through orders on this portal, i.e. submitting decisions on changes in the same way, via an email service.</p> <p>In this way, the improvement of citizens' rights, that is an easier, more efficient and faster realization of citizens' rights will be ensured, as well as the efficiency and economy of the procedure, because the citizen will be electronically informed about the status of the submitted request for a change in the voter register.</p>	
<p>Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?</p>	<p>The commitment is relevant in relation to public accountability given that it encompasses the efforts of public authorities towards more efficient provision of public services to citizens. Also, the its implementation contributes to more efficient management of an accurate and complete voter list by the competent state bodies, at the same time showing the existence of awareness and responsibility for its accurate and timely updating.</p> <p>Bearing in mind that the implementation of the commitment will enable the electronic provision of services by the competent authorities through the eGovernment Portal, the commitment is also relevant in relation to the use of innovations and technologies.</p> <p>Finally, the commitment also contains elements of citizen participation, given that registration for the voter register with accurate data is a prerequisite for citizen participation in the electoral processes, and the implementation of this obligation improves the existing mechanisms for fulfilling this condition.</p>	
<p>Additional information</p>		
<p>Milestone Activity with a verifiable deliverable</p>	<p>Start date</p>	<p>End date</p>

1. Adoption of the Law on Amendments to the Law on the Seal of State and Other Bodies	II quarter of 2021	III quarter of 2021
2. Development of an electronic seal to the competent authorities (MPALSG and local self-government units)	III quarter of 2021	IV quarter of 2021
3. Implementation of the electronic seal in the Unified Voters Register system	IV quarter of 2021	IV quarter of 2021
4. Connecting the eGovernment Portal and the Unified Voters' List system	IV quarter of 2021	IV quarter of 2021
Contact information		
Name of responsible person from implementing agency	Marina Dražić	
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Other Actors Involved	State actors involved	Office of Information Technology and eGovernment
	CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups	

Commitment 6: Improving the quality of public service delivery through the establishment of a single public register of administrative procedures and a single platform with all information on procedures / services – ePAPER	
Commitment Start and End Date In progress - IV quarter of 2022	
Lead implementing agency/actor	Public Policy Secretariat

Commitment Description	
What is the public problem that the commitment will address?	Citizens and the economy face high costs of providing services and often complicated procedures in exercising their rights and fulfilling their obligations to public administration bodies, as well as problems in finding all the information needed to perform certain procedures smoothly, leading to less legal safety through poor predictability of business conditions, insufficient information about changes, and high administrative costs of business, which especially affects the economy.
What is the commitment?	Improving the quality of public service delivery is a multi-year reform process that takes place, among other things, through the simplification of administrative procedures (the elimination of redundancy and the simplification of other administrative procedures), as well as the establishment of a single public register of administrative procedures and other business conditions (hereinafter: Register) with a portal that provides all the necessary information.
How will the commitment contribute to solving the public problem?	<p>The register will be a publicly available electronic database of all administrative procedures and other business conditions conducted by public administration bodies and organizations. Business entities and citizens will receive all the necessary information for the implementation of a specific procedure in one place through the Register Portal: whether there is a form for submitting a request (to download it); to which the request is submitted and whether there is a possibility to submit it electronically; what other documentation is needed, in what form and whether it is necessary to finish something beforehand (notarization, etc.); what are the financial expenses (fees, charges, etc.); what is the deadline for resolving the request; the time of validity of the issued act and the envisioned right to appeal.</p> <p>Such publicly available information will save the resources of economic entities and enable them to dedicate more time to performing their own activities. It will provide legal safety for citizens and certitude in proceedings before public administration branches. The simplification of procedures will lead to a reduction of the administrative burden, by removing obstacles to the simple fulfillment of the obligations of economic entities and citizens.</p> <p>In the previous period, efforts were focused on the list of 2,600 procedures related to economic entities, and their optimization and digitalization is currently underway. In the following period, the cycle count, optimization and digitalization of administrative procedures related to citizens will be conducted, and a publicly accessible register with a portal containing all the necessary information on the procedures conducted before public administration bodies and organizations will be established.</p>

Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?	The introduction of the register and portal will contribute to: increasing transparency in the conduct of public administration, reducing the possibility of abuse and corruption, raising the level of public accountability, public availability of all relevant information for action, as well as facilitating daily business operations and exercising citizens' rights and obligations.	
Additional information	The commitment is recognized as one of the Government's main priorities, and is defined in numerous public policy documents: Program for simplification of administrative procedures and regulations "ePapir" for 2019-2021; eGovernment development program for 2020-2022; Public Administration Reform Strategy in the Republic of Serbia for 2021-2030 (under preparation).	
Milestone Activity with a verifiable deliverable	Start date:	End date:
1. Adoption of laws and bylaws for the establishment of the Register	In progress	I quarter of 2021.
2. Adoption of bylaws for the establishment of the Register	In progress	II quarter of 2021
3. List of administrative procedures for citizens	II quarter of 2021	IV quarter of 2022
4. Collecting economic and citizens' initiatives that should be changed, improving or abolishing procedures or ineffective regulations	In progress	It is carried out continuously
Contact information		
Name of responsible person from implementing agency	Ninoslav Kekić	
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Other Actors Involved	State actors involved	Office of Information Technology and eGovernment

	CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups	Serbian Chamber of Commerce NALED Foreign Investors Council American Chamber of Commerce
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Commitment 7: Establishment and development of a system for electronic reporting, response and monitoring of violence involving children, prevention and support of victims - platform "I protect you"	
Commitment Start and End Date In progress - II quarter of 2022	
Lead implementing agency/actor	Office of Information Technology and eGovernment
Commitment Description	
What is the public problem that the commitment will address?	<p>The findings of the research conducted in the Republic of Serbia in recent years show that violence against children is widespread in various forms and in different environments. Children in the Republic of Serbia are exposed to various forms of violence on a daily basis: the direct or interpersonal violence, such as physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect, as well as the less direct but complex forms of violence such as structural violence, which manifests itself in various forms – for example, through various forms of discrimination (child marriage, child labor or other forms of exploitation) or through serial social exclusion. The national report "Violence against children in Serbia" collected data on the prevalence of violence in relation to the environment in which violence occurs: in the family, in educational institutions, in social protection institutions, in the community and in the digital space.¹⁰¹</p> <p>The report also pointed out key issues in this area, highlighting, among other things, the lack of centralized administrative records that would allow easy, reliable and accessible access to data for various interested parties (including CSOs and the research community, and be it for the purpose of protecting children from violence in practice, or in order to analyze the state of affairs), then insufficient focus on violence prevention, the need to improve coordination and cooperation between the competent state bodies, as well as the need to further raise awareness and strengthen the capacity of all actors involved.¹⁰²</p> <p>In addition, practice has shown the need to make the process of reporting violence involving children simpler and more efficient for citizens.</p>
What is the commitment?	<p>The commitment includes the development of a system for electronic reporting, response and monitoring of various forms of violence involving children, prevention and support to victims of violence.</p> <p>The platform would include three basic components: 1) reporting all forms of violence involving children, either as victims or perpetrators, 2) educational component, through the implementation of online training, and 3) the informational component, realized through setting up educational materials for parents, teachers and the rest of the interested public.</p>

	<p>The general goal of the commitment includes creating conditions for more efficient electronic reporting of violence involving children by the citizens themselves, but also a coordinated reaction of the competent state bodies that will be much better connected through this platform. In addition, through the management and public availability of statistics in this area, the aim is to improve information available to the public and provide preconditions for regular monitoring of the situation in this area.</p> <p>It is expected that through the implementation of the commitment, citizens will be able to easily, quickly and efficiently report violence, improve and balance the reaction of the competent state authorities and ensure public availability of statistical data on the situation in the field of violence committed by children.</p>
<p>How will the commitment contribute to solving the public problem?</p>	<p>The implementation of the commitment in a clearly standardized procedure will contribute to a timely, complete, continuous and legal response to individual cases of violence involving children.</p> <p>First of all, citizens will be able to efficiently, quickly and easily, in one place, file a report and follow all the elements and phases of the reported case. Therefore, citizens will have an insight into the actions of the competent authorities, which will enable a clear determination of responsibility in cases of their untimely or inadequate reaction.</p> <p>In addition, the platform will ensure a coordinated response of all institutions of different systems and their necessary connection in providing assistance and support to victims of violence.</p> <p>Also, providing and publishing complete data will improve the transparency of the work the state bodies do in dealing with reported cases of violence involving children, but also make publicly available the data on reported and resolved cases, measures taken, etc. The special value of such data is the fact that their further analytical processing will enable the creation of the necessary basis for future planning of policies and activities on the prevention and protection of child victims.</p> <p>Finally, through the informational and educational component of the platform, important steps will be taken to raise awareness and improve the knowledge and skills of pupils, teachers, parents and all other interested citizens regarding prevention and other aspects of violence involving children.</p>
<p>Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?</p>	<p>First of all, the realization of the commitment will indisputably provide relevant information, analytically considered, which is available to the public, and which does not violate the privacy of the individual. In this way, full transparency is achieved and public insight into the manner and content of the system's institutions' response to the occurrence of violence</p>

¹⁰¹Strategy for Prevention and Protection of Children from Violence from 2020 to 2023 ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 80/2020).

¹⁰²http://socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Nasilje_prema_deci_u_Srbiji_Nacionalni_izvestaj.pdf

	<p>against children is made possible, ensuring public awareness of the characteristics and scope of the phenomenon.</p> <p>In this sense, the commitment is relevant in relation to several core values of the OGP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First of all, access to information and data possessed by state bodies or arising in their work, which concern violence committed by children, is improved. • Insight into the way in which competent authorities react creates the basis for determining clear responsibility in the system of actions, which contributes to the improvement of public accountability as a value of OGP. <p>Finally, given that the system rests on the development and the use of the platform, the commitment is also relevant in relation to the use of technology and innovation.</p>	
Additional information	<p>The Office for Information Technologies and eGovernment will be in charge of the technical establishment, functioning and maintenance of the platform itself, while the responsibility for the implementation of specific content through the platform will belong to various state bodies, in accordance with established competencies.</p> <p>The commitment is fully in line with the General Objective of the Strategy for Prevention and Protection of Children from Violence from 2020 to 2023 ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 80/20), which means "ensuring society's continuous comprehensive response to violence against children, in accordance with the dynamics of challenges, risks and threats, through an improved system of prevention, protection and support."</p>	
Milestone Activity with a verifiable deliverable	Start date:	End date:
1. Established system for electronic reporting, response and monitoring of violence involving children, prevention and support to victims - developed platform "I protect you" (component 1)	In progress	I quarter 2021 (January 2021)
2. Piloting the platform (component 1)	I quarter of 2021 (February 2021)	I quarter of 2021 (March 2021)
3. Realization of <i>online</i> training sessions for pupils and teachers (component 2)	II quarter of 2021 (June 2021.)	II quarter of 2022 (June 2022.)
4. Setting up educational materials for pupils, teachers and citizens (component 3)	I quarter of 2021 (February 2021.)	II quarter of 2022 (June 2022.)
5. Monitoring the situation through the publication of statistical data on violence involving children	I quarter of 2022 (March 2022.)	II quarter of 2022 (April 2022.)

Contact Information		
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Other Actors Involved	State actors involved	Government Working Group for Peer Violence
	CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups	Association of Lawyers AEPA

Commitment 8: Amendment of the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance	
Commitment Start and End Date In progress – IV quarter of 2021	
Lead implementing agency/actor	Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government
Commitment Description	
What is the public problem that the commitment will address?	<p>The Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance was adopted in 2004 and amended in 2007, 2009 and 2010, with amendments aimed at improving the text in order to improve implementation or to balance the text with the changes in other regulations in the legal system, for example in connection with the execution of the Commissioner's decisions, changes in the competent ministry for supervision (due to changes in the Law on Ministries), and changes in penal provisions.</p> <p>And if the Law is rated as one of the best in the world in this area by eminent international NGOs, practice has shown that there exists a need to further improve the Law to ensure its full implementation in practice including strengthening the Office of the Commissioner, as we are keeping pace with the principles of Open Administration, in accordance with the new regulations (new LAP, protection of personal data, etc.).</p> <p>One of the most important issues is the proactive publication of information by the authorities in the newsletter, but also the expansion of</p>

the circle of persons covered by the Law, specifying the procedure for election and dismissal of the Commissioner, improving the enforcement of commissioner's decisions, increasing penalties with a law relevant to improving the exercise of the right of access to information of public importance.

The Commissioner for Information of Public Importance received a similar number of complaints in 2016, 2017 and 2018, amounting to about 3,500, while during 2019 there was a noticeable increase in the number of complaints filed. The reasons presented in the complaints mostly refer to the cases of the so-called silence by the management, but also submission of a negative answer, without issuing a decision with the reasons for rejecting the request and a lesson on the legal remedy. High percentage of well-founded complaints (above 85%), but also a large percentage of suspended proceedings (over 50%) after the authorities act upon the request of the applicant in the meantime, after learning about the complaint and the required statement by the Commissioner, and before making a decision on the complaint, indicate that the changes in the legal framework make it necessary to influence the administrative bodies to better and more promptly perform their legal obligations.

A special working group for the preparation of the text of the Draft Law on Amendments to the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance was formed, by the decision of the Minister of State Administration and Local Self-Government, on November 3, 2016.

In accordance with the proclaimed principles of transparency in the adoption of regulations and the involvement of the non-governmental sector, the professional public and independent bodies, the Working Group prepared a Draft Law on Amendments to the Law.

Cooperation with the Commissioner, meetings with representatives of state bodies, independent bodies, and civil society speak in favor of a transparent and inclusive process. On the working version of the Draft Law on Amendments, public online consultations were held from February 5 to February 15, 2018, which collected over 100 suggestions and proposals by the public and civil sector representatives. Taking into account the received suggestions, the Working Group finalized the Draft Law, after which a public debate was held, from March 22 to April 19, 2018, and within it a Round Table on March 27, where, in addition to members of the Special Working Group, representatives of state bodies, business entities, academia, professional associations, eminent experts in this field, as well as representatives of more than 30 civil society organizations were present. Comparing the number of obligations received on certain proposed solutions and the importance of the issues they regulate, the Ministry did not send the Law to the competent authorities to give their opinions and to the Government to determine the proposal immediately after the public hearing, but rather decided to

	<p>organize a new round of meetings with activity holders, and together they came up with the best solutions.</p> <p>In the rules of procedure for collecting the opinions of the competent institutions, the text of the Draft Law, given the importance of the area it regulates, was sent to a wide range of state bodies and institutions (a total of 26). The Ministry received all opinions of competent bodies and institutions by April 2019, including the opinion of the European Commission (prepared by SIGMA for the needs of the EC on December 19, 2018).</p> <p>The new Commissioner, Mr. Milan Marinović, was elected in July 2019 and the Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Government left room to comment on the Draft Law, and the new Commissioner sent new proposals in September that were not subject to previous changes, for which reason the procedure is ongoing.</p>
<p>What is the commitment?</p>	<p>It is necessary to amend the Law on Free Access to Information in order to ensure the improvement of respect for the right to access information, as well as the deadlines prescribed by law. At the same time, the obligation to proactively publish information should be improved – through an electronic Information Booklet.</p> <p>The following provisions need to be included in the future Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure effective control of the legality of the work of state administration bodies and other subjects of administrative-inspection supervision due to violation of the right to access information of public importance, while respecting the principle of independence of the control body and the principle of good administration; 2. Increase the circle of bodies/persons to which the application of the law applies, both to the newly established ones and to some that have not been covered so far and whose scope requires it; 3. Reduce the number of reasons for rejecting requests due to abuse of rights stated in the Law, such as frequent submission of requests and scope of information; 4. Improve the procedure for the election and termination of the Commissioner's mandate, the position of the Deputy Commissioner and the Office of the Commissioner; 5. Determine the whether or not it is mandatory to obtain the opinion of the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection in the process of passing the law if the act contains issues within the scope of this body; 6. Improve the situation in the field of enforcing the Commissioner's decisions for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection;

	<p>7. Balance the severity of fines with the Law on Misdemeanors and establish a protective mechanism so that the realized level of the right to access information could not be reduced by other regulations;</p> <p>8. Establish the obligation of the bodies that are obliged by this Law, to proactively publish information of public importance through the introduction of an electronic Fact Sheet and a single portal that would ensure better implementation.</p>	
<p>How will the commitment contribute to solving the public problem?</p>	<p>Amendments to the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance would improve the proactive publication of information of public importance through the introduction of an electronic fact sheet aimed at proactive, timely, complete, uniform publication of information by public authorities. One of the most important amendments to the law envisions the expansion of the circle of persons who are legally obligated to natural persons as executors of public authorities and city municipalities, as well as the introduction of full application of all legal obligations to all persons covered by this law which will, together with the introduction of an electronic fact sheet, contribute to more transparent work of public authorities and the consequent reduction of complaints to the Commissioner for the violation of the right to access information of public importance and at the same time increase respect for the right to access information, which also represents a constitutional category. Adequate supervision over the application of the Law and the application of the institute of enforcement of the Commissioner's decisions would facilitate the exercise of the right to access information. Also, amendments to the Law, in the direction of giving the Commissioner the authority to give an opinion within the law-making process, would prevent the possible reduction of the existing level of exercise and protection of the right to free access in other/special laws. The current weak efficiency of penalties for non-compliance with the law will be solved by doubling the range of fines (from 5,000-50,000 to 10,000-100,000 dinars), which will provide higher prevention and a more effective purpose of punishment.</p>	
<p>Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?</p>	<p>Improving access to information of public importance by amending the Law enables raising the level of exercising freedom of access to information, which is also one of the basic values of the Partnership. Also, a true commitment to better public administration and the fight against corruption necessarily implies transparent work of government bodies. It is precisely through the mentioned amendments to the Law that it would be possible to adequately resolve these issues.</p>	
<p>Additional information</p>		
<p>Milestone Activity with a verifiable deliverable</p>	<p>Start date:</p>	<p>End date:</p>

1. Finalizing the text of the Draft Law on Amendments to the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance	In progress	IV quarter of 2021
2. Submission of the Draft Law on Amendments to the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance to the Government, for consideration and determination of the Draft Law	IV quarter of 2021	IV quarter of 2021
Contact information		
Name of responsible person from implementing agency		
Title, Department	Assistant Minister, Sector for Public Administration	
Email and phone		
Other Actors Involved	State actors involved	
	CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups	

Commitment 9: Creating legal bases for the establishment of a central web portal displaying all procedures for environmental impact assessment, as well as procedures for strategic environmental impact assessment at the national, provincial and local levels	
Commitment Start and End Date I quarter of 2021 - I quarter of 2022	
Lead implementing agency/actor	Ministry of Environmental Protection
Commitment Description	

<p>What is the public problem that the commitment will address?</p>	<p>According to Article 29 of the Law on Environmental Impact Assessment ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 135/04 and 36/09), which regulates the manner of informing the public, it is the competent authority's obligation to inform the public about the request submitted issuing a decision on the need for influence assessment, then on the time and place of public insight, as well as the decision to give consent, i.e. rejection of the request, through at least one local newspaper, with the possibility of sending the mentioned notifications through electronic media. A similar solution exists when it comes to informing the public about the insight into the documents that are an integral part of the strategic impact assessment, and about which the public is informed through the media, but also in electronic form available on the website of the local government unit.</p> <p>The practice so far has shown the need to further improve these mechanisms, i.e. to make informing the public, and thus the opportunities for greater participation of citizens in these processes, more accessible and efficient. The previous need arises primarily from the fact that, for example, selected local newspapers do not always have to be the main sources of information for the local population, and such information can go unnoticed or can be obtained when it is too late to respond in a timely manner.</p> <p>Given the overall complexity of the impact assessment process and strategic environmental assessment, including the complex competencies of state bodies, it is very important to improve the availability of information on these procedures to the members of the interested public, as it is difficult for citizens to understand which body to address, and where information on the appropriate procedure has been published, making their participation more difficult. Also, in the existing conditions, in which the public is informed in the stated ways, it is difficult to compare and monitor several projects, including a review of completed public debates, data and the like.</p> <p>These problems could be overcome by forming a single database of all assessments and of the strategic assessments of the impact on the environment in the Republic of Serbia, which would ensure that all information on the course and stages of the procedure is available in one place and thus enable greater public participation, but also a more transparent procedure.</p>
<p>What is the commitment?</p>	<p>The commitment implies creating legal bases for the establishment of a central web portal with all procedures for environmental impact assessment and all procedures for strategic environmental impact assessment at the national, provincial and local levels. More precisely, the implementation of the commitment will make the necessary amendments to two key regulations in this area – the Law on Environmental Impact Assessment and the Law on Strategic Environmental Assessment – which will provide for the establishment of this web portal as a searchable</p>

	<p>database of all impact assessments and strategic environmental impact assessments.</p> <p>Creating legal bases is a necessary step towards the development of a web portal meant to make its use an obligation of the competent authorities, and in practice the portal has become a unique place for informing and involving the public in impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment procedures.</p> <p>In addition to the obligation to create a web portal, the amendments to the said laws will specify the period of two years starting from the moment when the law enters into force, in which it will become functional and enter into full use.</p>
<p>How will the commitment contribute to solving the public problem?</p>	<p>The establishment and mandatory use of a central web portal will make all information on environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment procedures available in one place. In that way, the interested members of the public will be able to get information about these procedures faster and easier, but also to participate in them. More precisely, through this portal, the competent authorities will inform the interested bodies and organizations, the public and the interested members of the public about all initiated impact assessment procedures and strategic impact assessments, the course of procedures, deadlines and ways of submitting opinions, public debates and direct access to documentation in accordance with law.</p> <p>Also, all interested members of the public will have the opportunity to gain insight and search the mentioned impact assessments in one place, which has not been the case thus far, laying the groundwork for further analytical processing by the professional public.</p> <p>In order to realize the above-mentioned goals and thus ensure uniformity in the use of the central web portal and join the implementation of impact assessment and strategic impact assessment and public participation in them, changes in the existing regulations provided by this obligation are necessary.</p>
<p>Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?</p>	<p>The commitment is relevant in relation to public participation, as it implies the development and improvement of existing mechanisms for the participation of the interested public and the procedures of impact assessment and strategic environmental impact assessment.</p> <p>Also, the commitment is relevant in relation to access to information, because the amendments to key laws lay the foundations for binding and uniform public information, in one place, for all procedures in the Republic of Serbia.</p>
<p>Additional information</p>	<p>Amendments to the Law on Environmental Impact Assessment and the Law on Strategic Environmental Assessment are envisioned by the National Program for the Adoption of the Acquis.</p>

Milestone Activity with a verifiable deliverable	Start date:	End date:
1. Developing the Draft Law on Amendments to the Law on Environmental Impact Assessment and the Draft Law on Amendments to the Law on Strategic Environmental Assessment	I quarter of 2021	III quarter of 2021
2. Conducting public debates	III quarter of 2021	IV quarter of 2021
3. The Government determines the Proposal of the Law on Amendments to the Law on Environmental Impact Assessment and the Proposal of the Law on Amendments to the Law on Strategic Environmental Assessment, which contain the obligation to establish a central web portal with all environmental impact assessment procedures and strategic environmental impact assessments	IV quarter of 2021	I quarter of 2022
Contact information		
Name of responsible person from implementing agency	mag. Sabina Ivanović	
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Other Actors Involved	State actors involved	
	CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups	

Commitment 10: Improving the management of access to data exchanged in the public administration system

Commitment Start and End Date
I quarter of 2021 - III quarter of 2022

Lead implementing agency/actor	Office of Information Technology and eGovernment
Commitment Description	
What is the public problem that the commitment will address?	<p>In a public administration system, the management of data flows, their accuracy and efficient exchange between the entities of that system are of key importance. Local self-government is independent of the central government, but the system of government cannot function effectively without good cooperation between these two levels of government. The same applies to data found in public companies, as they are the basis for the services most commonly used (traffic, energy, electricity, water, etc.). The data that is created and stored at the local level is necessary to the central level for good management and decision-making processes based on said information. However, the exchange of information between these two levels is sometimes not done in a satisfactory manner, primarily because there are no general rules governing this process, but the solutions are different in the case of different departments, which leads to different levels of efficiency. Access to data generated at the local level is of great importance for the work of the central government, and vice versa.</p> <p>Data exchange is often delayed, which negatively affects the work of both levels of government, and lowers the quality services to users. The data format is often non-standardized and tabulated as part of a narrative report (machine-readable and difficult to process and analyze). The method of reporting does not always contain clear instructions, so data from various sources flow to the central institution, which then needs to be further processed. Local governments are often required to submit the same data several times in different formats, by different public administration bodies. Also, the control of accuracy and quality of data is significantly reduced due to the undefined process. This can have a negative impact on the quality of conclusions and strategic decisions made at the central level, based on the processing of data generated in a way that is not centralized. Therefore, it is necessary to enable a fast, simple and standardized process of data exchange, primarily from the local to the central level of government. Keeping records in an open format (machine-readable format) would significantly contribute to better access to data throughout the administration system.</p> <p>So far, the activities of the national project "Open Data – Open Opportunities," which is a comprehensive intervention aimed at introducing data-opening policies and practices in the Republic of Serbia, have covered both the national and local levels. One of the most significant results in the field of regulation is the adoption of the Law on Electronic Administration (which prescribes the obligation to open data), as well as the related bylaws, the most important of which is the Decree on the method of working of the Open Data Portal (Official Gazette of RS, No. 104/18).</p>

	<p>This Decree regulates more detailed conditions on the establishment and method of working of the Open Data Portal, including organizational and technical standards, as well as other issues relevant to the functioning of the Portal. On the Portal, sets of open data are published by public administration bodies, institutions, public companies, special bodies through which the regulatory function is exercised, as well as legal and natural persons entrusted with public authorities. The Regulation on the manner of working of the Open Data Portal defines the general legal framework in this area. In addition to this regulation, there are initiatives and initial results for the development of recommendations and models for data opening, for which it is necessary to create additional internal rules for data submission from local to national level of government, which would ensure the implementation of these recommendations and models.</p>
<p>What is the commitment?</p>	<p>The commitment includes improving access to public sector data within the public authority system, improving data exchange between the provincial, local and central levels, and providing legal and organizational implementation mechanisms, which will enable the implementation, bearing in mind the independence of local self-government.</p>
<p>How will the commitment contribute to solving the public problem?</p>	<p>The commitment refers to the development of a uniform methodology and protocol for sending data from the place where they originate to the competent central institutions (including the manner and format of data collection). This practice is currently carried out in a way that is not efficient and represents a burden for local governments. A standardized methodology and training for its application would contribute to the generation of centralized data records that would be ready for publication in an open format, reuse, and visualization and analysis. This would form the basis for decision-making based on data.</p> <p>The goal is to improve and enhance the flow of information, its quality and accuracy and to have it generated, stored and updated in an open format. The obligation includes the development of binding instructions for the way data will be collected, the classification of the most important data types, selection of a data class that will be specially standardized, training of all relevant entities and monitoring the implementation and application of prescribed instructions on a pilot example. In this way, the identified problem is directly answered.</p> <p>The commitment also includes improving the internal flow of information within institutions and technical assistance for opening data.</p>
<p>Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?</p>	<p>The commitment is relevant in relation to transparency because it deals with mechanisms meant to encourage the opening of data at all levels of government and their publication on the Open Data Portal, especially at the local level, as well as opening the data of public companies, raising quality and standardization of data and thus improving their availability. Prescribing models and prioritizing certain types of data increases their availability, both for bodies in the public authority system and for users</p>

	<p>outside the system (civil society organizations, the economy, citizens). In that way, the realization of the right to information is enabled, and demanding that right is encouraged.</p> <p>The commitment is also relevant in relation to public responsibility, because it refers to the definition of rules and internal regulations on the local level, which assign the regulation of data access through the development of decisions of local governments and public utility companies for opening data, by areas and sectors of work, as well as the model of the rulebook on data collection, technical instructions and the model of job descriptions for introduction into the rulebooks on systematization.</p> <p>Finally, the commitment contributes to technology recognition in order to increase government openness and accountability, and promotes new technologies for the purpose of information sharing and citizen participation.</p>	
Additional information	<p>The commitment follows the goals of the eGovernment Development Program, one of which is specifically related to data-opening and raising the quality and standardization in the field of open data.</p> <p>The commitment also contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically Objective 16.6 (Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels), as well as Objective 16.10 (Ensure public access to information and protection of fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements).</p>	
Milestone Activity with a verifiable deliverable	Start Date:	End date:
1. Analysis of the current situation regarding the generation and use of data in the selected local government (what data is collected or generated, what is their quality, for how long, for what purpose, who generates them, how often and in which format, how they are stored and for what they are used, who uses them and how, who reports and on what basis and who manages the given data)	I quarter of 2021 (March 2021)	III quarter of 2021 (September 2021)
2. Prioritization of data sets by purpose, usage value and requirements from the central level based on the Analysis as well as development of general recommendations for opening data in selected local self-government units	III quarter of 2021 (September 2021)	IV quarter of 2021. (December 2021)
3. Development of an open data structure model for priority sets based on Analysis and prioritization	IV quarter of 2021 (December 2021)	I quarter of 2022 (March 2022)

4. Development of recommendations and models for amending/adopting internal acts for the institutionalization of the data opening process	I quarter of 2022 (January 2022)	II quarter of 2022 (April 2022)
5. Trainings and technical support for the application of the developed models and publishing on the Open Data Portal	II quarter of 2022 (April 2022)	III quarter of 2022 (August 2022)
Contact Information		
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Other Actors Involved	State actors involved	MPALSG
	CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups	UNDP office in Belgrade Open Data Working Group

Commitment 11: Development of a single information platform for monitoring project co-financing in the field of public information	
Commitment Start and End Date I quarter of 2021 - III quarter of 2022	
Lead implementing agency/actor	Ministry of Culture and Information
Obligation description	
What is the public problem that the commitment will address?	Public calls for co-financing the production of media content are the main way of allocating and spending budget funds in the media sector. They have been established as a state aid mechanism to help produce missing content of public interest and improve the degree in which citizens are informed.

	<p>The analysis of the current practice of conducting public calls has shown numerous problems, and one of the most serious objections by civil society and media associations referred to the impossibility of a comprehensive analysis of the effects of these calls (intended use of funds, quality of production content, etc.). Evaluation is largely hindered by the lack of centralized, publicly available data and documentation related to public calls (project applications and reports), as well as access to the produced content. This problem is also recognized in the Strategy for the Development of the Public Information System in the Republic of Serbia from 2020 to 2025, in item 4.4.</p> <p>The way to solve this problem is development of a single information platform, which would facilitate the search for announced calls, projects, decisions made on announced calls, submitted financial and narrative reports on realized projects, and contain links to broadcast or published media content for which the production is supported in this way. Based on the data entered in the single information platform, it would be easier to apply legal provisions prohibiting the financing of the same projects from different levels of government over a certain percentage, but also the availability of media content co-financed in this way to all citizens, in areas wider than those in which certain media are distributed.</p> <p>A single information platform would additionally enable greater publicity of data, bearing in mind that all relevant information would be available to all citizens of the Republic of Serbia.</p>
<p>What is the commitment?</p>	<p>The commitment includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of the regulatory framework and comparative practices in the application of information platforms for monitoring the implementation of public calls, with a technical specification for its development; • Amendments to the Law on Public Information and Media which would make the use of the platform a legal obligation for all bodies that announce and conduct public calls in this area and regulate its content and manner of functioning; • Formation and technical development of the information platform.
<p>How will the commitment contribute to solving the public problem?</p>	<p>The development of an information platform within this obligation will contribute to solving several problems: it will centralize all relevant data and thus facilitate the monitoring of public calls and their evaluation, facilitate and significantly improve the monitoring of budget spending, prevent possible abuses and enable greater availability of media funds.</p>
<p>Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?</p>	<p>The commitment will contribute to the improvement of several core values of the OGP.</p> <p>First of all, the commitment is relevant in relation to the improvement of fiscal transparency, given that its implementation enables public</p>

	<p>availability of data on the spending of budget funds intended for co-financing media content.</p> <p>At the same time, it is relevant from the aspect of improving access to information, because through the information platform covered by the commitment, a much larger set of information and data on how to spend budget funds in the field of media content will be made available. In addition, this data will be centralized and available in one place, which will provide citizens and all other interested parties with easy access.</p> <p>The commitment is also relevant in relation to the improvement of the accountability of public authorities, since it implies the creation of clear rules for publishing data on budget spending through changes in the legal framework, but also the creation of conditions for more efficient oversight of law enforcement.</p> <p>Finally, bearing in mind that the commitment implies the development of an appropriate information platform, it is directly related to the use of technologies and innovations as a special value of OGP.</p>	
Additional information	The commitment directly addresses the problem identified in item 4.4. of the Strategies for the development of public information in the Republic of Serbia between 2020 and 2025.	
Milestone Activity with a verifiable deliverable	Start date:	End date:
1. Analysis of the regulatory framework and comparative practices in the application of information platforms for monitoring the implementation of public calls, with a technical specification for its development	I quarter of 2021	II quarter of 2021
2. Adoption of the Law on Amendments to the Law on Public Information and Media which would make the use of the platform a legal obligation for all bodies that announce and conduct public calls in this area and regulate its content and manner of functioning	II quarter of 2021	IV quarter of 2021
3. Formation and technical development of an information platform	I quarter of 2021	III quarter of 2022
Contact information		
Name of responsible person from implementing agency	Slavica Trifunović	

Title, Department	Acting Assistant Minister	
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Other Actors Involved	State actors involved	Office of Information Technology and eGovernment
	CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups	BIRN

Commitment 12: Introduction of the obligation to conduct a public debate when determining topics important for the realization of public interest in the territory for which a public call is announced in the field of public information

Commitment Start and End Date
IV quarter of 2020 - IV quarter of 2021

Lead implementing agency/actor	Ministry of Culture and Information
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Commitment Description

What is the public problem that the commitment will address?

The Law on Public Information and Media determines the basic criteria for the evaluation of projects submitted in the announced public calls for co-financing media content from budget funds, and also prescribes that more detailed criteria are published within each public call. In accordance with that, among other things, public calls, as a rule, contain topics that are of primary importance in the period of announcing a certain call, as well as in a certain geographical area for which the call is announced.

However, in practice, such legal solutions have led to the fact that bodies that allocate budget funds either just take over the definition of public interest from the Law, without prioritizing certain topics, or arbitrarily set priorities without prior consultation with citizens of the community in whose area the public interest is realized through supported media content.

In that way, citizens remain deprived of the opportunity to express their needs in relation to the desired media content, but also the chance to participate in some way in the decision-making process on the manner in which budget funds are spent.

In that sense, the Strategy for the Development of the Public Information System in the Republic of Serbia between 2020 and 2025 envisages that "amendments to the law in the field of public information, as well as the

	<p>accompanying bylaw will prescribe, as an additional criterion in project co-financing competitions, the results of public hearings on which citizens expressed their opinion on topics and media content in order to achieve the public interest of citizens in the territory for which the competition was announced ”(measure 4.4., activity 4.4.1).</p>	
What is the commitment?	<p>The commitment includes amendments to the Law on Public Information and Media and the accompanying bylaw, in the direction of introducing the obligation of public authorities which conduct calls in the field of public information, to organize a public debate before announcing topics important for achieving public interest in the field of public information on the territory for which the competition is announced.</p>	
How will the commitment contribute to solving the public problem?	<p>By introducing the obligation to conduct public debates in order to define priority topics for achieving public interest through media content, citizens are given the opportunity to express their needs and point out particularly important topics for the community in which they live, which should be supported by budget funds.</p> <p>Also, in this way, they are given the opportunity to participate in the process of deciding on the spending of budget funds through participation in public debates.</p> <p>Overall, involving the community in the process of defining priority topics of public interest in its area ensures that supported media content responds to the needs of the citizens who make up that community.</p>	
Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?	<p>On the one hand, the commitment is relevant in relation to fiscal transparency, given that its implementation provides a better insight into the spending of budget funds by citizens.</p> <p>Also, the commitment contributes to improving the participation of citizens in decision-making processes, bearing in mind that, through public debates on particularly important topics for the realization of public interest, citizens are given the opportunity to participate in some way in the decision-making process regarding the use of budget funds.</p>	
Additional information	<p>The commitment is directly related to measure 4.4. of the Strategies for the development of the public information system in the Republic of Serbia for from 2020 to 2025.</p>	
Milestone Activity with a verifiable deliverable	Start date:	End date:
1. Forming a Working Group for developing the Draft Law on Amendments to the Law on Public Information and Media	IV quarter of 2020	II quarter of 2021
2. Developing the Draft Law on Amendments to the Law on Public Information and Media	II quarter of 2021	III quarter of 2021

3. The Government determines the Proposal of the Law on Amendments to the Law on Public Information and Media	IV quarter of 2021	IV quarter of 2021
Contact information		
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Other Actors Involved	State actors involved	Working group for drafting the Law on Amendments to the Law on Public Information and Media
	CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups	