



RIIGIKANTSELEI

ESTONIA'S OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP ACTION PLAN FOR 2018–2020

SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Open Government Partnership (hereinafter ‘OGP’) is an international initiative that aims to increase openness, transparency, and citizen-centredness in the exercise of public authority, using new technologies in doing so. Estonia joined the initiative in 2012.

“Estonia’s Open Government Partnership Action Plan for 2018–2020” (hereinafter ‘Action Plan’) is country’s fourth national action plan. Open and inclusive policy-making has been a priority throughout all action plans.

The preparation of the action plan was carried out under the leadership of the OGP Coordinating Council that has members from the ministries, parliament, local government and civil society. With the directive of the Secretary of State on December 3rd 2019 a new board, the Open Government Committee on Development (hereinafter ‘ARVAK’) was established. This board took over the responsibilities of the OGP Coordinating Council and of the Committee of Administrative Capacity of the EU Structural Funds. ARVAK has been the coordinator of the implementation of this Action Plan.

The process of developing the Action Plan began on March 13th 2018 when the OGP Coordinating Council agreed upon the schedule and principles of the Action Plan. At the same time, public call for ideas was launched with the deadline of April 12th 2018. Next, the proposals from the public call were discussed with non-governmental organisations and possible implementers that lead to the choice of activities of the Action Plan. Government of Estonia approved the Action Plan on August 30th 2018.

According to the decision of the OGP Coordinating Council made on February 13th 2018 the overview of the results of the Action Plan was published regularly on the web page of the Government Office. Also, all the implementers monitored the process of fulfilling the commitments according to the milestone activities they were responsible for.

The OGP Coordinating Council and later ARVAK met three times during the implementation period of the Action Plan. This self-assessment report of the Action Plan (hereinafter ‘Report’) was discussed and edited on November 10th 2020 by ARVAK. The Report was thereafter sent to participating ministries for commenting and also put on public consultation. The Government of Estonia approved the Report on December 17th 2020.

The Independent Reporting Mechanism (hereinafter ‘IRM’) presented its Design Report of the Action Plan in October 2019. Out of six activities two were evaluated as noteworthy: ‘Information technology supporting transparent and inclusive policy making’ and ‘Simple and user-friendly presentation of the local public service levels’. In addition, five key recommendations were made for the development of next action plans:

- Prioritize engaging more diverse stakeholders in the development of OGP action plans, in particular groups facing more barriers to political participation (e.g. people with disabilities, rural communities).
- Dedicate funds to the Government Office’s Strategy Unit for strengthening stakeholder engagement around OGP action plans. Part of these activities may also be carried out in partnership with members of the Coordinating Council and the civil society roundtable.
- Continue focusing on 5-6 commitments in a few priority areas. The areas could be selected on the basis of stakeholders’ priorities, in agreement with the implementing institutions.
- Continue implementing commitments that involve the development of civic tech, fostering open government at the local level, and bringing civil society and public officials together around a common interest or goal (e.g. joint projects, events and platforms).

- Design more ambitious commitments that can last through several action plans, providing verifiable milestones for each step. Align the OGP process with other large-scale strategic processes such as the state reform or the Estonia 2035 strategy process and determine where OGP can add value.

These recommendations have been implemented as much as possible in Estonia's next national action plan that was approved by the Government of Estonia on October 1st 2019.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL ACTION PLAN COMMITMENTS

The Action Plan consisted of three commitments and six activities. Although the implementation of some activities was delayed also due to the corona crisis, all six activities have been completed as planned. Next, an overview of the results is given one activity at a time.

COMMITMENT 1: INCREASE ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY IN POLICY-MAKING

1.1. Information technology supporting transparent and inclusive policy-making		
July 2018 – June 2020		
Lead implementing agency/actor		The Government Office
Other actors involved	State actors involved	All ministries, constitutional institutions and national associations of local governments
	CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups	Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations, Estonian Cooperation Assembly, e-Governance Academy, etc.
Commitment description		
What is the public problem that the commitment will address?		<p>The e-Consultation Information System (EIS) was introduced in 2011 to coordinate draft legislation between ministries and manage documents of the European Union. Back then, it was a unique information system combining three earlier ones that was also open for the public, enabling searching for information and commenting of draft legislations.</p> <p>By now, the system is technically outdated and the expectations of the users, both officials and stakeholders, have increased. The stakeholders are interested in an open platform that would allow them to participate in the earlier stages of policy-making (not just in the final stage of coordinating or commenting documents) and observe the process history and forming of decisions. Although EIS has been developed further, e.g. by adding a notification function to share information regarding initiatives earlier than previously, the new functions are not used sufficiently and do not help in meeting the goal of allowing early access to the public. Additionally, instead of being user-friendly, the environment is slow and complex.</p> <p>Another channel for participation in addition to EIS is osale.ee, which is also technologically outdated and insufficiently used.</p>
What is the commitment?		The Government Office in cooperation with other agencies, and stakeholders will define requirements for

	creating a new information system that would at least cover the functions of the current e-Consultation system and osale.ee.
How will the commitment contribute to solve the public problem?	Defining the requirements together with stakeholders is a precondition for a new environment that would support transparent and inclusive policy-making and meet the needs of different users.
Which OGP values is this commitment relevant to?	Transparency Civic participation
Additional information	Efforts to promote EIS as a Mayn channel for participation will be continued while developing the new information system. In addition to updating EIS, the Ministry of Justice has initiated the pre-analysis process necessary for developing a collaboration environment for policy makers. It is important that the possible new developments be seamlessly compatible.

Completion Level	Not Strated	Limited	Substanti al	Completed
Description of the results	<p>Lead by the Public Sector Innovation Team, the user trajectories and initial solutions as low-accuracy prototype have been created for the legislation and policy-making processes. These results were introduced to participants of this process (also at the gathering of iKlubi¹) and to the Secretaries General. Next, the joint working group of the Government Office, the Ministry of Justice and the parliament described the overall principles (April–June 2019). In July 2019 the Ministry of Justice in co-operation with the Government Office started the creation of a prototype. This prototype was tested in eight test-groups between December 2019 and March 2020 and further developed according to feedback. Also, possible obstacles of co-creation and the legislation process that need to be taken into account in developing the prototype have been discussed. Intermediate results were introduced to ARVAK on February 18th 2020. In March 2020 the Centre of Registers and Information Systems in co-operation with the Ministry of Justice, the Government Office and the Chancellery of the Riigikogu started the development of the first phase of the state's co-creation workplace on the principle of agile development (deadline is December 31st 2020). In addition to test-groups ca 300 potential users of the co-creation</p>			

¹ Presentation in Estonian: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1X5qthQTnraw5irA6VfHfEG96bI7na_Tm/view

	workplace have been consulted in 2020 either individually or in different events.
Next steps	The development of the co-creation workplace is carried on to the ‘Estonian Open Government Partnership Action Plan 2020–2022’ (commitment 1.1) with the focus on development and testing of the text redactor.

Milestone Activity	Start date	End date	Completion Level
Assessing current situation and needs of the citizens, stakeholders and state agencies, including analysis of user experiences.	July 2018	December 2018	Completed
Considering alternatives and describing the functions and interfacing of the new environment.	January 2019	June 2019	Completed
Preparing terms of reference, including describing the requirements of the information system and making a prototype.	January 2019	June 2020	Completed

1.2. Shaping a policy-making process that is inclusive, knowledge-based, and citizen-centred, and developing skills

April 2018 – December 2019		
Lead implementing agency/actor		The Government Office
Other actors involved	State actors involved	The Ministry of Finance, State Shared Service Centre, all ministries
	CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups	Praxis, Centar, Velvet, Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations
Commitment description		
What is the public problem that the commitment will address?	<p>The independent reporting mechanism’s national researcher (OGP 2016–2018), the Coordinating Council, and the task force of the public sector and social innovation have all emphasised the need to improve leadership and provide more training courses related to engagement.</p> <p>The network of engagement coordinators of the ministries was created in the fall of 2007 when each ministry appointed one or several engagement coordinator who would be responsible for the dissemination of information and counselling regarding engagement practices in the</p>	

	<p>ministry. The goal of the network is exchanging information related to engagement and harmonising the inclusion practices of the ministries. The coordinators require development and empowerment to enhance engagement practices and resolve the problems related to it.</p> <p>Senior managers of civil services play an important role in supporting inclusive policy-making, as their attitudes and skills have an impact on the engagement practice of state agencies.</p> <p>Prior to 2013, central training courses on inclusion were organised for 268 officials, and in 2011–2017, roughly the same number of representatives from non-governmental organisations and agencies attended the inclusion spring school. However, no additional training courses have been organised in the previous years. Some of the policy-making skills that that need promoting are evidence-based methods and data processing, storytelling, and visualisation.</p>
What is the commitment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve the work of the network of engagement coordinators, strengthen the role of coordinators in ministries, and develop their leadership skills. ▪ Improve the attitudes and skills of top civil servants in leading inclusive, citizen-centred, and knowledge-based policy-making. ▪ Develop the skills of central governments and local officials and non-governmental organisations in engagement, negotiation, and impact assessment.
How will the commitment contribute to solve the public problem?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engagement coordinators help to disseminate and introduce good engagement practices and increase the use of participation channels in the ministries. ▪ Training senior managers of civil services would shape the attitudes of the managers and develop skills to lead inclusive and citizen-centred policy-making. ▪ Training officials and non-governmental organisations improves their skills in engagement and participation.
Which OGP values is this commitment relevant to?	Civic participation
Additional information	The activity is funded from the administrative capacity priority axis measures.

Completion Level	Not Strated	Limited	Substanti al	Completed
				x
Description of the results	The organisation of work of the network of engagement coordinators has been revised and their roles and tasks better described. In addition to the main engagement coordinator many ministries now have additional people			

	<p>who can support the main coordinator. The network is meeting at least four times a year but the non-formal interaction between the members of the network has substantially grown. In co-operation with civil organizations a development program for the engagement coordinators has been created. This four-day training course gives the coordinators necessary tools to develop co-creation processes and events and skills to manage potential conflicts. This will foster the use of co-creation in the policy-making processes in the ministries. Also, since 2018 courses for civil servants to develop their skills of analysis in civic participation have been carried through in four modules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process leading and participation • Evaluation of impact in policy-making. Income-cost analysis • Selection of modules on evaluation of impact and processes (introduction to data analysis program R, modern R, vizualisation and autimatisation in R, methods of qualitative data collection and analysis, regression analysis, pairing and diff-in-diff analysis, methods of machine learning, big data and network-analysis, impact evaluation with simulations). <p>321 participants in 2018 and 493 in 2019 took part in these courses. The aim to have at least one third of participants from the local governments and non-governmental organizations has also been followed.</p>
<p>Next steps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The network of engagement coordinators is a partner in implementing the commitment ‘1.2 Increasing co-creative policy-making skills ! of the ‘Estonian Open Government Partnership Action Plan 2020–2022’. • Central training program will continue.

Milestone Activity	Start date	End date	Completion Level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The organisation of work of the network of involvement coordinators has been revised and the network is actively operating. ▪ A procurement has been published for carrying out the policy-making training programme for senior managers of civil services. ▪ 100 state or local government officials and representatives of non-governmental organisations have been trained. The programme has been reviewed and updated based on 	<p>April 2018</p>	<p>December 2018</p>	<p>Completed</p>

feedback from the first training groups.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The network of involvement coordinators is actively operating. ▪ 40 top civil servants have been trained. ▪ 600 state or local government officials and representatives of non-governmental organisations have been trained. 	April 2018	December 2019	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The network of involvement coordinators is actively operating. ▪ 40 top civil servants have been trained. ▪ At least 700 state or local government officials and representatives of non-governmental organisations have been trained. 	April 2018	June 2020	Completed

1.3. Increasing the openness and transparency of the Riigikogu

July 2018 – June 2020	
Lead implementing agency/actor	Riigikogu
Other actors involved	State actors involved
	CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups
Commitment description	
What is the public problem that the commitment will address?	<p>In 2016, the Riigikogu Rules of Procedure and Internal Rules Act was amended, making the minutes of committee sittings more informative than before. The State Gazette (Riigi Teataja) enables subscribing to e-mail notifications regarding all draft legislations and the stages of legislative proceeding, from coordination to publishing in the State Gazette.</p> <p>In 2017, the Anti-Corruption Select Committee developed recommendations for the members of the Riigikogu on how to communicate with lobbyist and described sample situations which may occur.</p> <p>Therefore, the openness of the Riigikogu has somewhat increased; however, the practice has not been harmonised between committees and problems occur with the speed of publishing information, participation in the legislative</p>

	proceeding of draft legislation, and access to data regarding both web publications and open data.
What is the commitment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In order to make the information on the web page of the Riigikogu more available and user-friendly, the web page is further developed in a manner which allows processing data related to the plenary assembly in a machine-readable format. Publishing of minutes of committees is hastened and harmonised between committees.
How will the commitment contribute to solve the public problem?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By publishing the open data, information related to legislating becomes more available and more possibilities are created to use information published by the Riigikogu. Faster publishing of minutes makes legislating more transparent, as the public receives up-to-date information on how the decisions are formed.
Which OGP values is this commitment relevant to?	Transparency Civic participation
Additional information	-

Completion Level	Not Strated	Limited	Substantial	Completed
				x
Description of the results	<p>The open data services of the Chancellery of the Riigikogu are available.² Open data is issued through the Application Program Interface in JSON-format. This open application brings together data from different information systems (among them stenograms, voting results, participation, document registry, information on parliament mebers and civil servants of Riigikogu, legislation drafts, search results, statistics). Much of the data in API is presented with universally unique identifiers (UUID). Minutes are published as soon as possible after a sitting of a committee has finished.</p>			
Next steps				

Milestone Activity	Start date	End date	Completion Level
Open data of the Riigikogu are being tested.	October 2018	May 2019	Completed

² <https://api.riigikogu.ee/swagger-ui.html>

Open data of the Riigikogu are constantly available.	October 2018	June 2019	Completed
Minutes are published as soon as possible after a sitting of a committee has finished.	July 2018	June 2020	Completed

COMMITMENT 2: INCREASE ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

2.1. Developing open government action plans and activities in local governments

September 2018 – December 2020		
Lead implementing agency/actor		The Ministry of Finance
Other actors involved	State actors involved	Municipalities
	CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups	The Association of Estonian Cities and Rural Municipalities, e-Governance Academy
Commitment description		
What is the public problem that the commitment will address?	<p>Following the 2017 administrative-territorial reform, there are 79 local governments in Estonia, most of which adhere to the principles of open government (e.g. publishing information on their web site, youth councils, broadcasts of council sittings on VOLIS, inclusive budgeting) but do not always comprehensively think through their activities and implement them systematically. Some local governments lack engagement of the public and non-governmental organisations, others do not publish their activities sufficiently, do not notify, etc.</p> <p>In the framework of the 2016–2018 OGP Action Plan, the e-Governance Academy helped to develop an action plan for an open government in two joined local governments, Elva and Lääneranna, and prepared general recommendations for an open government in all local governments. Further activities are required to introduce these recommendations to local leaders as well as citizens and take action.</p>	
What is the commitment?	<p>Supported by the European Social Fund, the Ministry of Finance is organising a call for proposals to increase the cooperation and leadership capabilities of local governments, enabling, among other things, application for support for promoting an open government; applications can be submitted by all local governments, their associations, organisations engaged in other areas, and non-governmental associations that wish to contribute</p>	

	to raising awareness on activities of open government or its implementation on the local level.
How will the commitment contribute to solve the public problem?	Awareness on the principles of open government is increased and following these principles ensures more efficient participation of citizens and better availability of information related to decision-forming.
Which OGP values is this commitment relevant to?	Transparency Civic participation
Additional information	The exact budget and number of projects depends on the applications submitted to local government and outcomes of assessing the projects in comparison to other projects. The activity is funded from the administrative capacity priority axis measures.

Completion Level	Not Strated	Limited	Substanti al	Completed
Description of the results	<p>Two projects were financed from the first application round in the autumn of 2018: the municipalities of Põlva and Valga. To introduce and discuss the principles of open governance, the Ministry of Finance held a seminar in 2019 for the local governments in co-operation with experts from the e-Governance Academy and from the municipalities of Tartu and Elva that have already made open governance their target principle.</p> <p>From the second application round the municipality of Rakvere's project on implementing the open governance principles was funded.</p> <p>In a survey in the autumn of 2019 six local governments reported of having an open governance action plan as of 2018 (some have it as part of their development plan)³. Next survey will take place in the spring of 2021 to map the situation of 2020.</p>			
Next steps	<p>Activities to promote the open governance principles in local governments will carry on as part of day-to-da'y work and also as part of the 'Estonian Open Government Partnership Action Plan 2020–2022' (commitment 2.1 'Introducing the principles of open government within local governments').</p>			

³ Elva, Hiiumaa, Lääne-Nigula, Lääneranna ja Rae vald ning Tartu linn. Vt minuomavalitsus.fin.ee

Milestone Activity	Start date	End date	Completion Level
Discussing the conditions of the call for proposals with stakeholders.	September 2018	September 2018	Completed
Announcing the call for proposal.	October 2018	December 2018	Completed
At least five local governments have developed their open government action plans or implemented activities that increase awareness on the open government principles and their implementation.	December 2018	December 2020	Completed

2.2. Simple and user-friendly presentation of the local public service levels

July 2018 – June 2020	
Lead implementing agency/actor	The Ministry of Finance
Other actors involved	State actors involved The Government Office
	CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups The Association of Estonian Cities and Rural Municipalities, Estonian Cooperation Assembly
Commitment description	
What is the public problem that the commitment will address?	The availability and quality of local public services varies across local governments. At the same time, there is no reference information on the service level, including quality and availability, which complicates improvements.
What is the commitment?	The methodology and analysis completed in the summer of 2018 gives an overview of which services are provided in local governments and on what level. An attractive and comprehensive tool available for all citizens is developed based on this methodology and analysis, and each citizen, local government, and ministry can use this tool to view the data of their local government categorised by areas and compare these to Estonian averages and data of other local governments. The users can give feedback in the application.
How will the commitment contribute to solve the public problem?	The tool is a source of information for the citizens, offering knowledge on what arguments to use when participating in discussions and what service level to demand in local governments. Simultaneously, it serves as a management tool for both local governments and the central government. Local governments can find out exactly what is done well and what needs improving. The local government can plan

	more exact intervention and support measures to improve the service quality.
Which OGP values is this commitment relevant to?	Transparency
Additional information	-

Completion Level	Not Strated	Limited	Substanti al	Completed
Description of the results	<p>The application was published in August 2020 and is also available in English (https://minuomavalitsus.fin.ee/en). The functionality and of the application and the principles of presenting the data and the prototype were created in co-operation with partners. Promoting the use of the application will follow.</p> <p>The application gives an overview of the state of services and development possibilities in each local government and allows comparing local governments' service levels. Therefore it is a tool for decision-makers in the local government in directing local development but also to citizens increasing their informed involvement in discussing local priorities.</p> <p>The application presents 16 service categories evaluating them on a scale of 1 to 10. Overall, there are more than hundred evaluation categories and three service levels: basic, advanced and excellent. The data is published from year 2016 onwards.</p>			
Next steps	<p>With the support of the European Social Fund this application will be developed further to better the evaluation system, to automatisize the data flow and to promote the application. In addition, the results will be analysed for a more proof-based development of the services of local governments.</p>			

Milestone Activity	Start date	End date	Completion Level
Developing a presentation prototype in cooperation with partners	July 2018	December 2018	Completed
Preparing terms of reference for the development in cooperation with partners	July 2018	February 2019	Completed
Completion of the development	February 2019	December 2019	Completed

Promoting active use of the tool	January 2020	June 2020	Completed
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COMMITMENT 3: DEVELOP ATTITUDES TOWARDS AND SKILLS IN PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

3.1. Develop attitudes towards and skills in participatory democracy		
January 2016 – December 2019 (following the previous action plan)		
Lead implementing agency/actor		The Ministry of Education and Research
Other actors involved	State actors involved	Foundation Innove
	CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups	Non-governmental organisations concerned, Tallinn University, University of Tartu, Estonian History and Civics Teachers Association, Society of Human Studies, regional subject sections, Estonian School Student Councils' Union, publishing houses, etc.
Commitment description		
What is the public problem that the commitment will address?		Open and inclusive policy presumes development of the citizens' attitudes towards and skills in democracy. This does not merely mean acquiring knowledge in lessons but also developing more comprehensive attitudes in schools.
What is the commitment?		When updating the national curricula of basic schools and upper secondary schools and preparing the education and research strategy in 2018–2019, the Ministry of Education and Research consults with appropriate stakeholders, including youth organisations, to ensure the inclusion of skills necessary for participatory democracy in the strategy and curricula. The interested parties (including non-governmental organisations) present their proposals to update the learning objectives and learning outcomes pursuant to the principles of the new concept of learning ⁴ .
How will the commitment contribute to solve the public problem?		By knowing methods of participatory democracy, including possibilities of ICT, the citizens will have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to pursue open government and participate in it.
Which OGP values is this commitment relevant to?		Civic participation
Additional information		The activity was started in the previous action plan; the concept of integrated curricula of social sciences was completed. The development of the curricula began in 2018 and the process of developing the curricula is

⁴ <https://www.hm.ee/en/learning-approach>

	ongoing. The curriculum has been developed in an inclusive manner and various stakeholders have been consulted in the process.
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Completion Level	Not Strated	Limited	Substanti al	Completed
Description of the results	The working group of social disciplines presented their proposals to the Foundation Innove in January 2019. Proposal consisted of describing the core competences, describing of the learning outcomes in different disciplines and levels of education (primary and secondary school) and also the describing of evaluation criterias of these outcomes. The Ministry of Education and Research has used these proposals in the process of creating the next education strategy (for example in world café events for youth, regional seminars and at the Opinion Festival).			
Next steps	Next activities will be carried on as part of implementing the ‘Education Strategy 2021–2035’. Also the activities of the ‘Youth Strategy 2021–2035’ support these aims.			

Milestone Activity	Start date	End date	Completion Level
The working group of the field of study prepares and presents primary proposals for the updated learning outcomes.	July 2018	December 2018	Completed
Consultations with stakeholders	January 2019	December 2019	Completed

3. CONCLUSION

The Action Plan has been completed as planned. Many of the activities are carried on to the 'Estonian Open Government Partnership Action Plan 2020–2022': development of a co-creation workspace, increasing co-creative policy-making skills and introducing the principles of open government within local governments.

As has stated IRM in its Design Report, the strength of Estonia is the information technology supporting the transparent and co-creational policy-making. The development of the co-creation workplace continue in the next action plan, the application to compare the levels of services of local governments (minuomavalitsus.fin.ee) has been published and will be further developed outside the context of OGP action plan. This shows that national action plans of OGP do offer some flexibility and could be used both for activities that will be implemented in full during the two-year-period of the action plan but also for activities that take more than one national action plan circle to develop.

It is also wise to continue with activities addressed for the local governments. Although a local government could apply for the OGP Local initiative, the municipalities in Estonia are relatively small and therefore it is sensible to involve the activities of open governance on local level in the national action plan.