

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

This report was written by IRM staff with contributions from Partners-Jordan

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Jordan's third action plan led to major advances in the decentralization of political power and the drafting of an ambitious open data policy. While a majority of commitments in key policy areas were either completely, or substantially, implemented by the end of term, there remains opportunity for increased engagement of civil society in the design and implementation of more ambitious commitments.

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a voluntary international initiative that aims to secure commitments from governments to their citizenry to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. The Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) carries out a review of the activities of each OGP-participating country. This report summarizes the results of the second year of implementation from July 2017 to July 2018 and includes some relevant developments up to October 2018.

Jordan began its formal participation in September 2011, when Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh, deputizing for King Abdullah II, declared the country's intention to participate in the initiative. The Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC) is the leading office responsible for Jordan's 2016–2018 action plan. MOPIC was the institution responsible for the first OGP action plan, while the Ministry of Public Sector Development was responsible for the second action plan.

Jordan's third action plan targets issues relevant to the national context, such as the enforcement of the access to information law, media freedom, and decentralization of political power to foster public participation at the local level. Other commitments seek to improve the processes by which complaints are registered.

During the implementation phase, the government developed and implemented a national open data policy; made resources available for persons with visual impairments to better access the justice system; and expanded the platforms available to register and monitor government complaints.

However, some commitments lacked sufficient scope and ambition for tackling stakeholder-identified policy issues, while some commitments faced delays, with implementation starting after their allotted time. To address these issues, in the next action plan, the government could engage with a broader spectrum of CSOs (including Royal NGOs and Non-Royal NGOs), and focus on fostering a more constructive dialogue so that stakeholders feel ownership of the action plan. It is also recommended that Jordan considers the inclusion and effective implementation of commitments in areas of national

Table 1: At a Glance

	Mid-term	End of term
Number of Commitments	11	
Level of Completion		
Completed	3	6
Substantial	2	3
Limited	2	1
Not Started	4	1
Number of Commitments with...		
Clear Relevance to OGP Values	10	10
Transformative Potential Impact	3	3
Substantial or Complete Implementation	5	9
All Three (🎯)	1	3
Did It Open Government?		
Major	2	
Outstanding	0	
Moving Forward		
Number of Commitments Carried Over to Next Action Plan	3	

importance, including the enforcement of the FOIA, securing the operating environment for media, and fostering greater public accountability.

The Jordanian government published its end-of-term self-assessment report on 30 November 2018 on MOPIC's website.¹ The government organized development of the fourth action plan and included consultation with civil society actors. The draft action plan was published and open for a two-week comment period, and was published in the administrative language, Arabic.

The fourth action plan was launched in November 2018 and includes five commitments in total, three of which were carried forward from this action plan (Commitments 1, 4a, and 10):

- Commitment 1 was carried into Commitment 5: Institutionalization of the enforcement measures for access to information law
- Commitment 4a was carried into Commitment 4: unification and development of the national Human Rights violations complaints mechanism
- Commitment 10 was carried into Commitment 2: Development and enhancement of the application of government open data policy

The other two commitments are new commitments which are related to the recommendations made in the progress report for the third action plan; namely improving the relationship between the public sector and civil society on issues such as procedures around receiving foreign funding, and enhancing the national discussion to promote political reforms in the areas of elections, political parties, decentralization, and municipalities' legislation.

¹ http://www.mop.gov.jo/EchoBusV3.0/SystemAssets/pdf/ogp/EoTR_Jordan_OGP_3rd_NAP.PDF (accessed 13 March, 2019)

Consultation with Civil Society during Implementation

Countries participating in OGP follow a process for consultation during development and implementation of their action plan. Governments commit to identify a forum to enable regular multi-stakeholder consultation on OGP implementation. This can be an existing entity or a new one. This section summarizes that information.

MOPIC organized three stakeholder meetings to inform CSOs on the implementation of Jordan’s third action plan. To invite the different stakeholders MOPIC representatives sent both personalized and general emails.

The IRM researcher attended the first multi-stakeholder consultation on implementation on 28 November 2017. The first half of this meeting took place between MOPIC and the government implementing agencies to provide an update on the progress of commitments. No civil society representatives were present during this part of the meeting. The second half of the meeting, however, involved civil society stakeholders and MOPIC presented an overview of the commitments and sought the opinion of civil society on the commitments.

MOPIC hosted a second consultation with civil society on 23 March 2018. At this meeting, MOPIC invited civil society representatives on the multi-stakeholder forum to present challenges in relation to their engagement with implementing government agencies and discussed ways in which these challenges could be overcome. MOPIC also provided civil society with an update on the status of commitment implementation.

The final multi-stakeholder meeting, on 15 May 2018, saw the participation of over 100 state and non-state actors, to launch MOPIC’s Open Government Unit.¹ MOPIC shared updates regarding commitment implementation with civil society. The government also shared the process through which it selected the commitments that it chose to include in the action plan, including those that were added directly as a result of civil society recommendations. Additionally, MOPIC gave the IRM researcher an opportunity to share some recommendations from the mid-term progress report. MOPIC also organized several breakout groups with topics based on some of the major commitments including Access to Information and Open Data.

The stakeholder meetings were invitation-only and took place in Amman—no forum was held in other governorates. However, MOPIC sent invitations to about 200 organizations in its database and meetings involved the participation of stakeholders from outside the capital.² As confirmed through attendance notes, the forums comprised members of the MSF and other professional NGOs, spanning policy areas from women’s rights and the rule of law to transparency, environmental protection, and freedom of the press. Several donor agencies were also present.

In addition to these meetings, MOPIC noted that activities under a number of commitments were implemented in close cooperation and coordination with civil society. Commitments 3, 5, and 10, for example, were singled out by MOPIC as examples of civil society engagement during implementation of commitment activities. As discussed in detail below, these commitments were either substantially or completely implemented by the end of term.

Table 2: Consultation during Implementation

Regular Multi-stakeholder Forum	Midterm	End of Term
1. Did a forum exist?	Yes	Yes
2. Did it meet regularly?	Yes	Yes

Table 3: Level of Public Influence during Implementation

The IRM has adapted the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) “Spectrum of Participation” to apply to OGP.³ This spectrum shows the potential level of public influence on the contents of the action plan. In the spirit of OGP, most countries should aspire for “collaborative.”

Level of Public Influence during Implementation of Action Plan		Midterm	End of Term
Empower	The government handed decision-making power to members of the public.		
Collaborate	There was iterative dialogue AND the public helped set the agenda.		
Involve	The government gave feedback on how public inputs were considered.		✓
Consult	The public could give inputs.		
Inform	The government provided the public with information on the action plan.	✓	
No Consultation	No consultation		

About the Assessment

The indicators and methods used in the IRM research can be found in the IRM Procedures Manual.⁴ One measure, the “starred commitment” (★), deserves further explanation due to its particular interest to readers and usefulness for encouraging a race to the top among OGP-participating countries. Starred commitments are considered exemplary OGP commitments. To receive a star, a commitment must meet several criteria:

- Starred commitments will have “medium” or “high” specificity. A commitment must lay out clearly defined activities and steps to make a judgment about its potential impact.
- The commitment’s language should make clear its relevance to opening government. Specifically, it must relate to at least one of the OGP values of Access to Information, Civic Participation, or Public Accountability.
- The commitment would have a "transformative" potential impact if completely implemented.⁵
- The government must make significant progress on this commitment during the action plan implementation period, receiving an assessment of "substantial" or "complete" implementation.

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

In the 2016-2018 midterm report, Jordan’s action plan contained one starred commitment. At the end of term, based on the changes in the level of completion, Jordan’s action plan contained three starred commitments.

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

About “Did It Open Government?”

To capture changes in government, practice the IRM introduced a new variable “Did It Open Government?” in end-of-term reports. This variable attempts to move beyond measuring outputs and deliverables to looking at how the government practice has changed as a result of the commitment’s implementation.

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

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

- Worsened: Government openness worsens as a result of the commitment.
- Did not change: No changes in government practice.
- Marginal: Some change, but minor in terms of its effect on level of openness.
- Major: A step forward for government openness in the relevant policy area, but remains limited in scope or scale.
- Outstanding: A reform that has transformed “business as usual” in the relevant policy area by opening government.

To assess this variable, researchers establish the status quo at the outset of the action plan. They then assess outcomes *as implemented* for changes in government openness.

Readers should keep in mind limitations. IRM end-of-term reports are prepared only a few months after the implementation cycle is completed. The variable focuses on outcomes that can be observed in government openness practices at the end of the two-year implementation period. The report and the variable do not intend to assess impact because of the complex methodological implications and the timeframe of the report.

¹ Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Agenda for Launch of Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation Open Government Unit, 15 May 2018, <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Tm5VD0C78rBWWAgek7KQJjU7LIPwh0jvj>

² IRM online interview with CSO representative, Ragheb Shraim - Executive Manager, Al-Hayet-Rased, 2019.

³ https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/pillars/Spectrum_8.5x11_Print.pdf

⁴ IRM Procedures Manual, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/irm-procedures-manual/>

⁵ The International Experts Panel changed this criterion in 2015.

Commitment Implementation

General Overview of Commitments

As part of OGP, countries are required to make commitments in a two-year action plan. The tables below summarize the completion level at the end of term and progress on the “Did It Open Government?” metric. For commitments that were complete at the midterm, the report will provide a summary of the progress report findings but focus on analysis of the ‘Did It Open Government?’ variable. For further details on these commitments, please see the Jordan IRM progress report 2016-2017.

This action plan focuses on the areas of improving access to information, strengthening public participation and accountability, and improving governmental accountability and transparency. The government drafted most of the action plan and then presented the draft to civil society to collect feedback. Many of the commitments also refer to other government initiatives, including the National Integrity Charter and the Comprehensive National Plan on Human Rights, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals and the Jordan National Vision and Strategy 2025.

Table 4: Assessment of Progress by Commitment

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion				Midterm		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	End of Term				
																			Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
1. FOI legislative framework 🌟			✓		✓						✓	✓				✓			✓				
2. Strengthen the facilities available for persons with disabilities			✓		✓					✓					✓				✓				
3. Legal framework on freedom of the media		✓				✓				✓		✓			✓				✓				
4. A. Complaints mechanism			✓			✓	✓			✓		✓						✓					
4. B. Complaints			✓			✓	✓			✓					✓				✓				

related to governmental services																✓				
5. Decentralization on law and council elections 🌐			✓			✓						✓				✓				✓
6. Automated healthcare services			✓		Unclear					✓					✓			✓		
7. Interactive observatory forum to monitor government's plans and progress			✓		✓			✓		✓			✓							✓
8. Budget and financial disclosure				✓	✓						✓					✓				✓
9. Participatory policies on climate change		✓			✓	✓				✓				✓						✓
10. Open data 🌐			✓		✓	✓		✓			✓			✓						✓

I. Strengthen the Legislative Framework Governing Access to Information

Commitment Text:

The National Human Rights Plan clearly emphasized the importance of amending and enacting the Access to Information Law. The plan recognizes that the current legal framework (issued in 2007) suffers from certain imbalances while the operational plan of the National Integrity System contains a commitment to review the legislation related to the protection of the right to access information. In addition, the Jordanian Government accepted many of the Human Rights Universal Periodic Review recommendations in 2013 which stipulated the importance of revising the regulatory environment governing the right to access information. The enforcement of the law suffers from a general lack of associated procedures to the law. Furthermore, the current law is not the only legal tool that deals with access to information issues. As a result, there are technical and administrative difficulties related to the management of information across various public-sector institutions.

Objective: Harmonize national legislation and policies concerning the right to access information with international standards and best practices.

Brief description: Review the legislative system, identify existing problems in the practices and management of information systems and propose a bundle of legislative and procedural amendments.

Milestones:

1. Specialized review conducted of the Jordanian legislative system. National review team established including civil society organizations. 2018/7/4-2018/8/9
2. Matrix created which shows obstacles, barriers and challenges in related laws and legislation. 2018/6/1-2018/8/31
3. Policy paper developed which includes recommendations related to possible amendments and best practices. 2018/6/1-2018/8/31
4. Review package submitted to the Jordanian Parliament in order to adopt the proper amendments. 2018/8/31-Ongoing

Responsible Institution(s): Information Council

Supporting Institution(s): National Library

Start Date: 4 July 2018

End Date: Ongoing

	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact			Completion		Midterm		Did It Open Government?					
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
Commitment Overview			✓		✓						✓	✓							✓		
I. Overall ★			✓		✓						✓	✓			✓				✓		

Commitment Aim:

This commitment aims to improve the regulatory environment governing the right to access to information. Among other activities, it promotes the establishment of a National Review Team to review the current law; the writing of a policy paper which includes recommendations and best practices; and the review of the proposals submitted to the Parliament to make necessary amendments.

Status

Midterm: Not Started

The commitment was not started in the first year of the action plan implementation.

End of term: Complete

This commitment was completed by the end of term. Although belatedly, the implementation of this commitment commenced when the Prime Minister shared a letter with the President of the Information Council (also the Minister of Culture) on 3 July 2018 requesting a review of all legislation affecting the freedom of information in Jordan, including the Access to Information Law.¹ Thereafter, the OECD, in partnership with the Arab World Center for Democratic Development and Human Rights (UNIHRD)—a civil society organization working on human rights and democratic processes at the local level—collected comments and suggestions for legislative reform from various civil society organizations, including the National Centre for Human Rights, the Center for Defending the Freedom of Journalists, and the Jordan Transparency Center.² OECD and UNIHRD organized the civil society feedback into an analytical information matrix, and shared it with the President of the Information Council on 5 July 2018.

On 9 July 2018, the Information Commissioner (also the Director General of the Department of the National Library) sent an official letter to members of the Information Council requesting their comments on the draft proposal for legislative amendments. The Council reviewed and submitted these amendments to Cabinet, in preparation for legislative procedures in Parliament. The Council submitted a first package of amendments to the Minister of Culture on 8 August 2018, who shared it with the Prime Minister's office.

However, as an amending draft of the Access to Information Law³ had been submitted and remained in Parliament since 2012, the government could not begin discussing the new amendment in the Legislative Bureau. Therefore, the Prime Minister needed to revoke the previous amendment to proceed with the new amendments. The Prime Minister initiated this process in November 2018, beyond the period of action plan implementation.⁴

Did It Open Government?

Overall: Marginal

Access to Information: Did Not Change

This commitment had no effect on increasing access to information as implementation did not result in the adoption of amendments to laws governing the freedom of information in Jordan. However, as a number of key steps were taken to review the relevant legislation and prepare amendments to be discussed in Parliament this commitment represents important steps in the right direction.

Civic Participation: Marginal

Although previously unanticipated, this commitment did contribute to a marginal improvement in civic participation, through the involvement of civil society in deciding on the proposed legislative amendments. According to Haitham Abu Atiyeh, from the Center for Defending the Freedom of Journalists, the Prime Minister's decision to revoke pre-existing amendments, and pursue new amendments in consultation with civil society, was well received by CSOs.⁵

Carried Forward?

Although the passage of new amendments to the law was interrupted by the need to revoke pre-existing amendments, CSOs like Lawyers Without Borders remain optimistic about the possibility of submitting new amendments.⁶

The commitment has been carried forward into the fourth action plan. The new commitment aims to revise and institutionalize procedures related to enforcing the access to information law issued in 2007. It also seeks to build a unified system for the management and classifications of government information, while taking into consideration the different challenges and issues that each governmental unit faces. A larger challenge to address during the next action plan is to shift to legally binding practices for government institutions to release information by default, which would better answer the public's needs.

¹ Ena'am Mutawe', OGP Focal Point, interview by IRM researcher, December 2018; online feedback from Mai Eleimat, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, September 2019.

² Online feedback from Mai Eleimat, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, September 2019; and online feedback from CSO representative, Ragheb Shraim - Executive Manager, Al-Hayet-Rased, 2019.

³ Access to Information Law, No. 47 of 2007.

⁴ Al-Rai newspaper, "The government withdraws the current Right to Information project from Parliament", 25 November 2018. <https://bit.ly/2Qz1jJC>

⁵ Haitham Abu Atiyyeh, interview by IRM researcher, May 2018.

⁶ Lawyers Without Borders is working on a series of new amendments, including an amendment to the Cybercrimes law. Sadam Abuazam, Executive Director of Lawyers Without Borders, views the Prime Minister's decision as an important window of opportunity and mentioned that civil society is working quickly to draft amendments and submit them in time. Sadam Abuazam, Executive Director, Lawyers Without Borders, telephone interview by IRM researcher, 13 December 2018.

2. Strengthen the Facilities Available for Persons with Disabilities

Commitment Text:

The national public census conducted by the Jordan Department of Statistics in 2015 revealed that 11 percent of the population has some type disability, while 2.64 percent of the population has a physical disability specifically. The justice sector, including the courts, lacks systems and mechanisms which provide persons with disabilities with the needed information on the litigation process, applicable procedures, the necessary signs, and information on how to use court facilities in a comprehensible way (i.e. information in Braille or other simplified methods). In addition, there are no automated systems or electronic databases which can provide persons with disabilities with the ability to easily access information related to the litigation process in a way that takes into consideration their special circumstances. The absence of such information results in hindering the provision of key services to a significant segment of the population, particularly the services related to accessing justice. This commitment aims to provide information about court facilities to better allow persons with disabilities to use the courts according to the nature and type of disability.

Objective: Enable persons with disabilities to access information related to the use of the justice system.

Brief description: Provide information about court facilities to better allow persons with disabilities to use the courts according to the nature and type of disability.

Milestones:

1. Working group established comprising relevant parties, including representatives of nongovernmental disabilities organizations, and scope of work drafted for the working group.
2. Information and data system designed identifying court procedures and guidelines which should be provided to persons with disabilities in Braille language or other simplified means.
3. Test samples for documents designed to be used in a limited number of central courts.
4. Effectiveness of the documents designed for the use of persons with disabilities measured

Responsible institution: Ministry of Justice

Supporting institution(s): Higher Council for Affairs with Persons with Disability, Society for Families and Friends of Persons with Disability (non-governmental organization), USAID Jordan Rule of Law Program

Start date: 1 January 2017

End date: 30 December 2017

	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Comple tion		Midterm		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
Commitment Overview																					
2. Overall			✓		✓					✓					✓				✓		

Commitment Aim:

This commitment aims to enable persons with disabilities to access information related to the use of the justice system. Activities under this commitment include converting all information and documents pertaining to the litigation process into braille, as well as providing electronic formats of the information that can be used by persons with disabilities.

Status

Midterm: Substantial

The commitment was substantially completed. In the first year the Ministry established a working group comprised of governmental institutions and representatives from NGOs. The working group worked on disability issues and subsequently drafted metrics and recommendations to assess the accessibility of public buildings in addition to spearheading a public awareness campaign. According to the Ministry, guide boards with braille—previously tested by people with disabilities—were placed in the Prosecution Service and the Judicial Execution Department. Furthermore, the Ministry developed a CD that offered an audio and visual aid to those with hearing impairments. They also generated a series of training modules focusing on the Ministry of Justice's¹ accessibility for the disabled. To supplement this effort, the USAID Rule of Law Program² conducted focus group sessions with people with disabilities, and a conclusive study to gauge the remaining challenges following the end of year one.³

End of term: Complete

The working group was established in the midterm (milestone 2.1) and the Ministry of Justice installed guidance boards with braille in the Amman Execution Department, Public Prosecution Department, and Juvenile Court (milestone 2.2).⁴

The USAID Rule of Law project conducted a survey to identify the needs and challenges that people with disabilities face. As a result of this survey the Ministry of Justice added guidance boards for people with visual impairments, which have proved to be effective in increasing the ease of movement of people with visual impairments⁵ (milestone 2.3). Additionally, the Ministry of Justice conducted a series of trainings for court employees and judges in the North, Middle, and South region. The sessions focused on the etiquettes of helping a person with a disability, and how to share the services provided for them. The Higher Council of People with Disabilities provided additional training sessions.⁶

The USAID Rule of Law project also conducted a study to identify the challenges faced by persons with motor and hearing disabilities in accessing information from the justice sector. Having satisfied the relevant evaluative metrics, this milestone was successfully completed and persons with disabilities are now able to acquire more information on how to effectually use the justice system. Since the midterm, information and documents pertaining to the litigation process have been available in braille and in various electronic formats (milestone 2.2).

The Ministry of Justice provided photos that allowed the IRM researcher to verify the completion of the different milestones. The Ministry also provided attendance sheets and recordings of training workshops (milestone 4).

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Marginal

This commitment aimed to provide information on court facilities to increase accessibility for people with disabilities. Previously, there were no mechanisms to guide people with visual impairments or any other disabilities in the different government courts or its units, despite 11 percent of the population in Jordan having some type of disability.⁷ The absence of these mechanisms has hindered the provision of key services to a significant segment of the population.

As a result of the implementation of this commitment, guidance boards and braille translations were installed. The implementation of this commitment increased access to judicial courts and the litigation process to people with visual impairments, thereby increasing civilians' access to information.

Compared to the status quo at the outset of the action plan, this commitment has led to greater inclusivity for those that had previously been unable to access important information. However, this commitment only marginally opens government, as it only provides accommodations to persons with visual impairments. For other types of disabilities, no improvements or mechanisms have been implemented to increase access to the justice system. For example, people with physical disabilities still face the same challenges as at the outset of this commitment. Nonetheless, it is a step forward for government openness in the Access to Information OGP value, particularly for a marginalized sector of society.

Carried Forward?

This commitment was not carried forward into the next action plan. More government facilities should be analyzed and strategies should be adapted to improve the accessibility of these facilities for persons with disabilities. The IRM researcher recommends that organizations such as the Higher Council for Persons with Disabilities conduct research to assess the current state of accessibility of all major government agencies and suggest actions based on those findings. Also, citizens and relevant stakeholders could be included in public consultations to determine the priority of facilities that require renovations. Adaptations may include ramps and lifts as needed. Additionally, the identified challenges of people with hearing disabilities should be further assessed to adapt facilities accordingly.

¹ The Ministry provided the agenda and the name of the facilitator for each training, held on 2, 6, 13, and 20 November 2017.

² Rawashan Alkurdi, focal point of the USAID Jordan Rule of Law Program, telephone interview, 12 November 2017.

³ The IRM researcher was informed that the study results were not published and that they were not authorized to share them.

⁴ Verification was provided by Samia Al Jaber, Head of Planning and Development, Ministry of Justice, October 2018.

⁵ Samia Al Jaber, Head of Planning and Development, Ministry of Justice, interview by IRM researcher, October 2018.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Samia Al Jaber, Head of Planning and Development, Ministry of Justice. Based on the Population and Housing Census 2015.

3. Strengthen the Framework Governing Freedom of the Media

Both the National Human Rights Plan and the National Integrity System’s Operation Plan affirmed the need to review and revise the legislative framework governing the work of media outlets and the harmonization of national legislation and policies concerning freedom of expression and freedom of opinion within the provisions of the Constitution. In addition, there is a need to take measures to address issues related to the licensing of media outlets and to regulate the media sector in a way that strengthens the right to freedom of opinion and expression and ensures the public’s right to know. This commitment aims at addressing the effects stemming from the rapid expansion of the media sector, the emergence of electronic media on a widespread scale, and the need for regulatory and legislative tools that correspond with such growth.

Objective: Ensure the independence of the media and protection of the right of expression.

Brief description: Design and implement a technical framework to define best practices that should be applied to strengthen the freedom of the press. This shall include the creation of a package of legislative amendments to be submitted to the Parliament.

Milestones:

1. National forum established with a consultation role to assist stakeholders in the area of freedom of the media (the government, media organizations, civil society, unions and experts)
2. Recommendations and suggestions collected related to improving freedom of the media from all available resources.
3. Mechanism established to engage the public in discussions related to the freedom of the press (an interactive electronic forum).

Responsible institution: Jordan Media Commission (formerly assigned to Ministry for Media Affairs),

Supporting institution(s): N/A

Start date: 01 January 2017

End date: 31 August 2018

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
3. Overall		✓				✓				✓			✓						✓		

Commitment Aim:

This commitment seeks to address the problems associated with the weaknesses governing freedom of the media. After the Egyptian uprising, the Jordan regime proposed amendments that require websites and media outlets to register with the government-controlled Jordanian Press Association.

Similarly, media outlets are forced to pay to join the Jordanian Media Commission, which prices out smaller projects. To tackle these problems, the approach of the commitment is to establish a national forum as a means of receiving consultation and recommendations on freedom of the media, as well as establishing a mechanism to engage the public in discussions related to freedom of the press.

Status

Midterm: Not Started

The commitment did not start in the first year of action plan implementation.

End of term: Substantial

The government made substantial progress on this commitment after the midterm. In accordance with milestone 3.2, the Media Commission reached out to CSOs, unions, and representatives of media outlets to request recommendations and suggestions on how to improve freedom of the press. The Media Commission also issued a press release on 16 August 2018 requesting recommendations and proposals from interested CSOs to improve media freedoms.¹

In accordance with milestone 3.3, the Media Commission held a meeting with one CSO, the Community Media Network, on 23 July 2018 to develop a mechanism and methodology to obtain public feedback in relation to improving media freedom. As a result of this meeting, the Commission agreed that researchers would prepare position papers on the following themes in relation to media freedom: legislative, political, societal, and professional. These papers would be published for public comment on social media after the action plan implementation period.²

Linked to such initiatives, the Media Commission also updated their website and activated a Facebook page on 28 March 2018 (which was first established on 17 November 2016).³ As envisioned under milestone 3.3, this update will allow citizens to have interactive conversations with the Commission via Facebook Messenger. Although beyond the action plan implementation period, the Commission also created a page on the Facebook account of the Complaints Committee to receive complaints through Messenger and publish activities related to the Committee.

Despite this progress, the government had not created the national forum in the area of freedom of the media by the end of term (milestones 3.1).

Did It Open Government?

Civic Participation: Marginal

The implementation of this commitment contributed to a marginal improvement in civic participation and open government. Although the commitment provided new opportunities for citizens, civil society, unions, and media outlets to engage in discussions on how to strengthen freedom of the media in Jordan, these opportunities were limited to the submission of input and complaints via social networks, and one in-person consultation with a single CSO; the Community Media Network. CSOs and journalists from Lawyers Without Borders and the Center for Defending the Freedom of Journalists thus expressed that the government did not do enough to facilitate participation and extend the invitation for submissions to other CSOs.⁴

Carried Forward?

This commitment was not carried forward into the next action plan. Next steps could include developing a specific commitment with measurable milestones which will effectively lead to legislation that improves the framework around freedom of the media. Media stakeholders, including independent media, could be at the forefront of the process of developing and implementing this commitment. A working group could be formed to oversee the whole process, consisting of key

CSO representatives, independent journalists, government representatives, and formal and informal media outlets.

¹ Media Commission press release, <http://www.mc.gov.jo/DetailsPage/NewsDetails?ID=48>

² Provided by Majd Alamed, Head of Cases unit (Legal Affairs) at the Media Commission, on 4 October 2018.

³ Media Commission Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/mediacommissionjo/>

⁴ Interviews conducted by IRM researcher at the multi-stakeholder meeting, Hayat Center, 24 October 2018.

4. Launch and Enhance the Complaints Registration System and Follow-Up Mechanisms to Deal with Complaints in a Serious Manner and Refer them to the Judiciary

A) Complaints and Grievances Related to Violation Committed Against Citizen

This commitment addresses the number and diversity of mechanisms that should receive and follow up on citizen complaints. The drafters of the National Human Rights Plan realized the scope of problems that may stem from the diversity of mechanisms. The plan calls for the establishment of an electronic database, which contains all complaints registered in Jordan. At the same time, the commitment seeks to raise the level of seriousness in receiving and following up on complaints, in addition to activating accountability options including judicial accountability when necessary.

Objective: Make the complaints and grievances mechanism more available to citizens in a more effective and organized fashion.

Brief description: Establish a unified electronic citizen complaints database, which citizens can use to follow on the actions taken regarding such complaints at all stages, maintaining gender equality in the use and administration of this system.

Milestones:

1. Instructions issued by the government to its related bodies and institutions directing them to work together to establish a complaints database and to name a governmental department to manage the data-gathering process, define the specifications of the database system, and establish linkages between the various related institutions within the database framework.
2. Database’s functional system designed and its technical development completed.
3. Sample testing performed to the database functions with the participation of civil society institutions, unions and certain universities, provided that the database system shall allow the following:
 - 3.1 provide citizens with the ability to access the complaints database.
 - 3.2 enable citizens to electronically follow-up on the procedures taken at all stages of the complaints process.
 - 3.3 enable citizens to register their notes on the complaint follow-up process.
4. Decision issued by the Prime Minister requiring government institutions to publish a link to the database site in a visible location within offices and on websites.

Responsible institution: Office of the National Coordinator for Human Rights

Supporting institution(s): N/A

Start date: 1 January 2017

End date: 30 November 2018

Commitment Overview	Specificity	OGP Value Relevance (as written)	Potential Impact	Completion	Midterm	Did It Open Government?
					End of Term	

4. A. Overall	None	
	Low	
	Medium	✓
	High	
	Access to Information	
	Civic Participation	✓
	Public Accountability	
	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	✓
	None	
	Minor	✓
	Moderate	
	Transformative	
	Not Started	↘
	Limited	
Substantial		
Completed		
Worsened		
Did Not Change	✓	
Marginal		
Major		
Outstanding		

Commitment Aim:

This commitment aims to increase the responsiveness to citizens’ complaints of violations of human rights, while also making it easier for citizens to register their complaints through a unified database.

Status

Midterm: Not Started

The commitment was not started in the first year of action plan implementation.

End of term: Not started

The IRM researcher made several requests for information from the Office of the Coordinator for Human Rights, but all requests (via email and telephone) were unanswered.¹

However, according to a representative of the coordinating Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC), the Office of the Coordinator for Human Rights pursued preliminary steps toward the implementation of this commitment during the action plan period.² Specifically, in cooperation with Lawyers Without Borders—a local CSO—the Office of the Coordinator for Human Rights conducted a study on the establishment of a national complaints system for human rights violations. This study was conducted in an inclusive manner; involving government and non-state stakeholders in a series of iterative consultations. The Office of the Coordinator for Human Rights was due to publish the results of this study beyond the implementation period of this action plan.

Did It Open Government?

Civic Participation: Did Not Change

This commitment had the potential to make it easier for citizens to register complaints in relation to human rights violations, by unifying the grievance system and increasing government’s responsiveness to complaints. However, as this commitment did not start during the action plan implementation period, this commitment did not contribute to a change in government practice.

Carried Forward?

This commitment was carried over into the fourth action plan. Commitment 4 in the new action plan refers to the unification and development of the national human rights violations’ complaints mechanism. The commitment entails adding a feature to the current complaints mechanism, Bekhedmatcom, to allow citizens to issue complaints related to violations of human rights.

¹The government focal point from the Office of the Coordinator for Human Rights was contacted by telephone on 13 September 2018. On that call, she agreed to share information pertaining to this commitment, but this did not happen. The IRM researcher sent follow-up emails and texts until 14 October 2018, but received no answer.

² Online feedback from Mai Eleimat, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, September 2019.

B) Complaints Related to Governmental Services and the Surrounding Environment of its Provision

Commitment Text:

This commitment contributes to the promotion of the complaints mechanisms by providing central complaint registration windows along with windows available in governmental departments with the assurance of a central window dedicated for registering complaints related to governmental services and the surrounding environment of providing these services.

Objective: Provide additional channels to receive complaints submitted by citizens and those who deal with the government on a broader level and in a more organized manner.

Brief description: Develop an electronic system for managing registration of complaints and grievances related to services delivery and the surrounding environment of provision. Address complaints and find proper solutions based on justice, equality and transparency.

Milestones:

1. Legislative system (regulation/instructions) issued which institutionalizes the existence of a central system to receive complaints related to governmental services.
2. Launch an Electronic complaints reception system related to services and the surrounding environment of their provision.
3. System made available for receiving complaints and also made available as a mobile phone application through the Ministry of Public Sector Development website/the Jordanian Government Electronic Portal.
4. Workshop held with the participation of civil society institutions and other concerned parties to explain the system and its functions.

Responsible institution: Ministry of Public Sector Development

Supporting institution(s): Prime Ministry and all government ministries and departments, National Communication Center, Citizens and CSOs

Start date: 1 January 2017

End date: Completed

	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact		Completion		Midterm		Did It Open Government?						
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
Commitment Overview			✓		✓		✓		✓						✓			✓			
4. B. Overall			✓		✓		✓		✓						✓			✓			

Commitment Aim:

The central government complaints management system was established prior to this action plan (on 11 April 2010). However, this commitment aimed at providing additional channels for the submission of public complaints related to governmental services, such as launching a mobile application and holding a workshop with CSOs to explain the system and its functions.

Status

Midterm: Complete

The commitment was completed at the midterm.¹ Although the central complaints management system existed before the beginning of the action plan,² the Ministry launched a mobile phone application and conducted a CSO workshop (milestone 4B.3).³ Also, an extra feature has been added to the platform which allows the upload of photos and files when submitting a complaint.

Currently the complaint system is accessible through the Ministry of Public Sector Development's website and the Government Electronic Portal, as well as the Bekhdatcom (At Your Service in Arabic) mobile application, mobile hotline (National Call Center), and Chat that has recently been added through Facebook (Milestone 4A). Up until May 2018 there were 10,969 Bekhdatcom app downloads.

According to a report submitted to the IRM researcher by the complaints unit, in April 2018, 754 requests directed to 60 government units were submitted. 37 percent were from the Bekhdatcom app, 55 percent through the national complaints line, and 8 percent through websites. 78 percent of these requests were complaints. 741 requests were addressed, and 708 requests were resolved.⁴

Periodic complaints are submitted to the office of the Prime Minister which directs the concerned departments to address complaints and questions the procedures taken to this end.

End of Term: Complete

Since the mid-term report, there were no relevant updates in the implementation of this commitment.

Did It Open Government?

Civic Participation: Marginal

This commitment opened government only in a marginal way as the central complaint management system already existed prior to the implementation of this commitment. However, as a result of the new added features, there has been a tangible increase (approximately 90 percent) in the number of complaints submitted, according to reports from the complaints unit that were provided to the IRM researcher for the months of March and April 2018.⁵ The Ministry of Public Sector Development also held a workshop to explain the mobile app and its functions and to receive feedback from CSOs. According to the evidence provided to the IRM researcher, the workshop was only informative and did not create or improve opportunities for CSOs to inform or influence government decisions.

Carried Forward?

This commitment was completed and was not carried forward in the next action plan. The IRM researcher recommends the government publish quarterly or annual reports on the performance of the app, as well as to inform which next steps will be taken to improve the system in place.

¹ Noor Dweiri, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit and Bilal-Hindi, Head of the Government Complaints Unit, Ministry of Public Sector Development, telephone interview by IRM Researcher, 27 November 2017.

² The act that regulates the central complaints systems was published in the official Gazette of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Issue No. 5430 Under “Government Services Improvement by law No.156 of 2016”.

³ Ministry of Public Sector Development, <http://www.mopds.gov.jo/en/Pages/Side%20Nav/Government-Complaints-Unit.aspx?MenuItem=4>

⁴ Bilal-Hindi, Head of the Government Complaints Unit, Ministry of Public Sector Development, 20 June 2017.

⁵ Monthly report on the government complaints system, submitted by Bilal-Hindi, Head of the Government Complaints Unit, Ministry of Public Sector Development, 20 June 2017.

5. Issue the Requisite Regulations and Instructions to Implement the Decentralization Law and Hold Governorate Council Elections in 2017

Commitment Text:

Before initiating a decentralization process, the central government institutions were in charge of developing plans for the various provinces or governorates from the outside in a manner that does not correspond with the principle of enabling the citizens of these governorates to make decisions related to their daily lives. This commitment, interpreted through the reinforcement of decentralization in government performance, shall enable the citizens in the governorate to become the decision-maker in determining expenditures related to industry, education, vocational training or other areas.

Objective: Enable citizens to participate in the planning for their future and defining their priorities.

Brief description: Issue the regulation related to the governorate council elections and conduct the elections in 2017.

Milestones:

1. The Council of Ministers adopt a draft regulation of the electoral constituencies for the provisional council elections.
2. Governorate council internal regulations adopted
3. Campaign launched to explain the decentralization law and the governorate council elections procedures:
 - 3.1 conduct a number of training programs and educative workshops related to the Decentralization Law across the Kingdom targeting groups according to the awareness raising plan including, but are not limited to: youth, women, associations, civil society organizations, public and private university students, political parties, local communities and persons with disabilities (the activities shall be performed by the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs).
4. Governorate council elections conducted

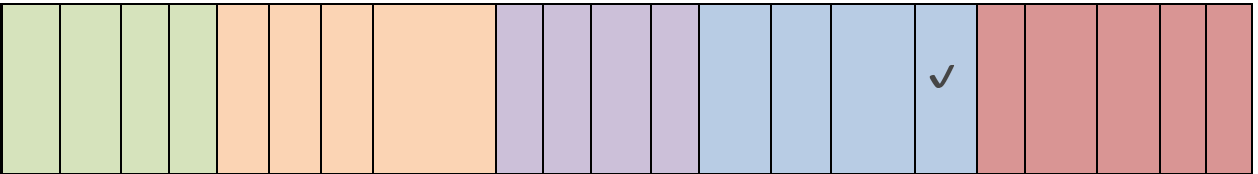
Responsible institution: Ministry of Interior

Supporting institution(s): Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs, Ministerial Committee on Implementing Decentralization, Government Decentralization Support & Liaison Unit

Start date: 1 January 2017

End date: August 15 2017

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm		Did It Open Government?					
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding	
5. Decentralization			✓			✓						✓				✓					✓	



Commitment Aim:

Jordan is characterized by having high centralization of political power and administrative organization. Moreover, tribal affiliations continue to have a strong influence over political life. The OECD recommended Jordan decentralize power and provided several recommendations¹ including revising the rules and regulations that hamper the emergence of more open government and enhancing coordination across all levels of government in the national planning and development process. The commitment addresses this problem by creating opportunities for citizens to participate at the local level through governorate council elections.

The commitment aimed to develop the internal regulations to implement the Decentralization Law and hold municipal council elections in 2017. Among other activities, the commitment includes conducting a campaign to explain the governorate council elections procedures, and conduct training programs and educational workshops across Jordan.

Status

Midterm: Complete

In the first year of implementation the commitment was completed, with council elections taking place on 15 August 2017 (milestone 5.4).

The Council of Ministers adopted the system to allocate electoral constituencies for the provisional council elections, and the Ministry of Interior adopted the governorate council internal regulations (milestone 5.1).

An Executive Committee and a Council of Ministers contributed to developing the internal regulations for implementing the Decentralization Law (milestone 5.2). According to the Ministry of Interior² they released a plan for decentralization as well, explaining the law. The Official Gazette, published in 2016 (Issue 5811), contains a detailed list of the governorates, districts, and number of seats open for election.

The Head of Associations Unit³ at the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs was responsible for the trainings and workshops implemented (milestone 5.3.1).

Additionally, the ministry carried out awareness-raising campaigns as well as workshops to explain the Decentralization Law and the governorate council election procedures; the government also provided potential candidates with resources meant to familiarize them with the roles of the elected council (milestone 5.3).

End of Term

This commitment was completed at the midterm, with no further developments being reported at the end of term.

Did It Open Government?

Civic Participation: Major

This commitment has contributed to a major improvement in open government in the context of civic participation. As a result of this commitment, citizens now have the opportunity to vote and influence decisions at the governorate level—an opportunity they did not have before. 2017 was the first time citizens were able to participate in local elections in the country; voting for mayors and

members of municipal and governorate councils. As a result of the implementation of this commitment, the Council of Ministers developed regulations and workshops which allowed Jordanians to have the necessary and pertinent information to vote in the governorate council elections. According to the NGO Al Hayat Center-RASED, the Independent Election Commission (IEC) trained 19,000 volunteers for an awareness campaign on polling methods and municipal and decentralization laws. In addition, more than 2,250 volunteers were deployed at polling centers across Jordan.⁴

However, statistics on voter turnout suggest that more could have been done to increase voter levels. According to a survey carried out by the International Republican Institute (IRI) some weeks before the elections, nearly 75 percent of the population was unaware of the elections. An analysis of turnout trends also points to widespread voter apathy, particularly in the capital Amman. According to RASED observers, poor awareness led to cases of accepting voter identification documents other than IDs and ballots cast outside designated voting areas. This resulted in more than 535 reported voting incidents.

Carried Forward?

This commitment was not carried forward in the next action plan.

If this commitment is included in future action plans, the IRM researcher recommends continuing implementation of the Decentralization Law, strengthening the legislation, and further clarifying the law to increase the effectiveness of its procedures. This may include, for example, providing a clear definition of what decentralization means; granting sufficient power to county councils; defining the role that CSOs can play in the county councils; etc. Legal amendments should also address all procedural distortions related to the organization of the polling process, especially with regards to the participation of women. Moreover, the law should guarantee the right of citizens and members of county and municipal councils to attend the meetings of the Executive Council. Finally, awareness-raising campaigns should be introduced prior to future elections, to encourage high voter turnout levels.

¹ OECD Open Government Review: Jordan, <https://www.oecd.org/mena/governance/Jordan-Highlights-2017.pdf>

² Sultan Hassan, Judiciary Unit Director, Ministry of Interior, interview by IRM researcher, 4 December 2017.

³ Ra'ad Hasanat, Head of Associations Unit, Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs, interview by IRM researcher, 6 December 2017.

⁴ OGP, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/stories/2017-local-and-municipal-elections-step-forward-jordan-s-journey-opening-government>, accessed 25 April 2019.

6. Develop Healthcare Services and Automate the Healthcare Sector Through Electronic Linkages

Commitment Text:

The Ministry of Health hospitals lack an automated information system and integrated applications which would strengthen the level of health services provided to citizens, improve the performance of hospitals and control its expenditures. Despite the large number of citizens who receive services at these hospitals, they still lack the electronic interconnectivity which minimize their ability to provide speedy and quality services.

Objective: Strengthen the infrastructure of Ministry of Health public hospitals to increase their ability to provide health services to citizens by connecting such hospitals with information systems and with other medical centers.

Brief description: Provide the internet connection infrastructure needed to connect the Ministry of Health hospitals and other national health and medical centers

Milestones:

1. Field survey conducted by the Ministry of Health and its various institutions targeting the characteristics related to each geographical area where public hospitals are located to determine the nature of the needed health services in such areas.
2. Requirements defined for data and information entry in the various medical centers.
3. Assessment conducted to measure the hospitals' technical abilities in terms of equipment and expertise.
4. Medical staff trained, including doctors, on how to complete and enter electronic forms into the automated system, such as death notification forms and the international coding for death reasons. Furthermore, provide training to medical staff on how to report on cases of violence against women (according to Mizan organization for Human Rights.)
5. Internet connection infrastructure provided, such as equipment and networking across all Ministry of Health hospitals.

Responsible institution: Ministry of Health

Supporting institution(s): Ministry of Transportation, Public Service Bureau, Public Procurement Bureau, Ministry of Telecommunications

Start date: 1 January 2017

End date: 30 August 2018

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm		Did It Open Government?					
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding	
6. Automated healthcare services			✓		Unclear					✓					✓			✓				

Commitment Aim:

This commitment seeks to address the problem of the lack of an automated information system for hospitals and the lack of interconnectivity which hinders the ability to provide speedy and quality services. The overall objective of the commitment is to strengthen the infrastructure of the Ministry of Health (MOH) and connect public hospitals with information systems and other medical centers to increase their ability to provide health services to citizens. The commitment is being implemented as part of the government's Hakeem Program to automate and improve the public healthcare sector in Jordan. The Hakeem Program, launched in October 2009 by Electronic Health Solutions (EHS), is a national initiative that seeks to improve the healthcare sector's efficiency through the adoption of an Electronic Health Record solution (EHR) that will allow healthcare providers to electronically access the medical records of patients.

Status

Midterm: Substantial

According to the self-assessment report and the mid-term report, the MOH assessed equipment and staff expertise in hospitals (milestone 6.3). They conducted field surveys to determine the nature of necessary health services in a given geographical area and then defined the requirements for data entry in medical centers (milestone 6.1). They conducted eight medical staff trainings on how to enter electronic forms into the automated system and report cases of violence against women (milestone 6.4). They did not provide documentation on the trainings to the IRM researcher.¹ The Ministry also worked towards developing requirements for data and information entry (milestone 6.2). Finally, the Ministry distributed computers to all centers and designed a system for monitoring deaths of women. They received funding from the World Health Organization to acquire 1000 tablets in all health facilities to facilitate improved reporting of such cases (milestone 6.5). Development and training on the electronic monitoring system for communicable and non-communicable diseases began in January 2014 and will continue into December 2020.² Efforts to further satisfy these criteria are ongoing.

End of term: Substantial

According to work and purchase orders provided to the IRM researcher,³ the MOH developed infrastructure in hospitals, health centers and health directorates as required for the electronic connection (milestone 6.5). The MOH also submitted a full list of aforementioned hospitals and centers and equipped buildings as well as security cameras (milestone 6.3). Furthermore, the MOH is in the process of installing fingerprint verification machines in all of the ministry's hospitals and centers (milestone 6.3).

As for the Hakeem plan,⁴ the MOH connected 91 of the ministry's hospital units through the system. The Ministry also formed a committee (the Central Committee for Patient Accounting System) to develop the accounting for patients and the warehouse management system. The MOH collected financial plans and added them to the system. Likewise, the MOH issued capacity-building trainings to improve employee proficiency with the new system (milestone 6.4.) However, not all of the ministry hospital units have been connected. According to focal unit reports, only 32 percent of government units have been connected so far.

Furthermore, the MOH linked its headquarters with the directorates of health and the central directorates to benefit from common services such as the unified electronic inspection system. The Ministry also integrated newly purchased computers to improve electronic tracking of vehicles (milestone 6.5).

A health services map app was developed on smartphones⁵ which included a link to download it from the Ministry's website. Many systems in the Ministry were digitized such as: a financial system,

personnel, licensing of professions and health institutions, developing a system for monitoring maternal mortality, and an electronic system for reporting communicable and non-communicable diseases in all reporting centers (milestone 6.5).

Did It Open Government?

Did Not Change

This commitment aimed to solve the problem of a lack of connectivity in Jordan's government hospitals. Albeit important for the healthcare sector in Jordan, the commitment did not change the status of open government. The electronic system and infrastructure implemented made storing and retrieving of patients' data possible. However, the system was conceived only for the internal use of the hospitals and it did not include any public-facing element that could have an impact on the public's access to information, public accountability, or civic participation.

Carried Forward?

This commitment has not been carried forward to the next action plan.

¹ An email was sent to the commitment focal point requesting information on 12 October 2018.

² Documents about technology purchases were provided to the IRM researcher but some of them were dated in 2012 and 2013.

³ Majd al-Ameer submitted progress reports on 17 October 2018.

⁴ Electronic Health Solutions, <https://ehs.com.jo/media/news/ehs-announces-its-plan-2017>

⁵ The IRM researcher verified this online as an application to download on 13 November 2018.

7. Develop an Interactive Observatory Forum for Citizens to Monitor the Implementation of the Government’s Plan and Progress

Commitment Text:

This commitment primarily seeks to ensure that Jordan’s Plan seriously and comprehensively implements the e-Government project. It aims to establish a mechanism within the project that will provide an outlet for citizens to view the Government’s implementation of its plans, procedures and projects in an interactive manner.

Objective: Strengthen the public’s interactive monitoring of government performance and its implementation of its various procedures, plans and projects.

Brief description: Launch a central electronic portal for citizens, members of the Parliament, donors and investors to follow up on the implementation progress.

Milestones:

1. Central electronic portal launched (www.plan.gov.jo) as part of Jordan’s 2025 program.
2. Procedures adopted to compel various public institutions to transfer information through the portal.
3. Liaison officers allocated to coordinate between various public institutions and the portal’s administration.
4. Regular schedule established for transferring information through the portal.
5. System designed for regular evaluation by citizens of the efficacy of the information and data provided through the portal and user-friendliness through regular questionnaires posted on the website and through the use of field opinion surveys (random samples, phone interviews, visits to public institutions).

Responsible institution: Prime Ministry

Supporting institution(s): Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

Start date: N/A

End date: N/A

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Comple tion		Midterm		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
7 Interactive observatory forum to monitor government’s plan and progress			✓		✓		✓		✓			✓			✓				✓		

Commitment Aim:

This commitment seeks to introduce public monitoring of government projects and plans. The commitment proposes to launch a central electronic portal for citizens, Members of Parliament, donors, and investors to follow up on implementation progress of various governmental initiatives.

Status

Midterm: Not Started

The commitment did not start in the first year of the action plan implementation.

At the government focal point committee meeting, the implementing government unit at the Prime Ministry shared that the commitment is part of the greater Jordan 2025 plan, of which some objectives had already been operationalized and relevant software developed. However, according to the statement, the Prime Minister's office noted that it had been unable to upload data to the program, and did not obtain approval to launch the portal at the midterm.¹

End of term: Substantial

This commitment was substantially complete at the end of term, with progress on all milestones being reported since the midterm. The Prime Ministry and MOPIC launched the portal, www.egp.jo, between 1 January 2018 and 30 April 2018, publishing information on 522 government projects across 17 sectors (milestone 7.1).² The Ministry and MOPIC included these projects in Jordan's Economic Growth Plan 2018-2022;³ which was adopted by the government on 3 May 2018. In March 2018, the implementing agencies issued letters to government agencies, outlining procedures that require the appointment of liaison officers at public service departments, and their role in transferring data through the portal (milestones 7.2 and 7.3). On 22 March 2018, the implementing agencies invited liaison officers and employees from 27 government agencies to attend a training on updating data on the portal. The Ministry also adopted a schedule for departments to transfer information to the portal through March 2018.⁴

In addition to these measures to establish and operationalize the portal, the implementing agency also put in place a framework for periodic monitoring of information provided on the portal. According to a government representative, this was done through electronic questionnaires and field interviews.⁵ The findings linked to these monitoring processes and protocol were not published on the portal (milestone 7.5). The portal is also able to receive public questions and comments, but—although the portal contains a general Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section—there was no clear indication as to whether the public received personalized responses.

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Marginal

At the outset of the action plan, there was no method for citizens to interactively monitor the implementation of government plans and projects. As a result of this commitment, however, government agencies were required to upload such data for public review on an electronic portal – with information on 522 projects being made available by the end of term. The establishment of this portal, and the associated introduction of operating procedures and protocol, are important steps towards improving public access to information.

However, the online portal—being at a nascent stage of development—was insufficiently user-friendly and contained inadequate opportunities for citizens to monitor and evaluate the efficacy of the data and the portal. Similarly, the use of the portal was also contingent on citizens' ability to access the internet, which further limited the scope of the initiative. As a result, although this commitment was a positive first step in improving citizen access to government information, the commitment remains limited in scope and thus only contributed to a marginal improvement in open government.

Carried Forward?

This commitment has not been carried forward into the next action plan. If included in future action plans, the government could consider introducing opportunities, through the portal, for citizens and civil society to provide input and influence decisions linked to government plans and projects, and thus facilitate and enhance public accountability and citizen engagement.⁶ In addition, more frequent and transparent evaluations of the portal and related protocol stand to ensure regular improvement of the portal and improve citizen interaction with the information.

¹ Alaa Qattan of the Mega Projects Monitoring at the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit shared this information with the IRM researcher at the Steering Committee organized by MOPIC on 28 November 2017.

² Online feedback from Mai Eleimat, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, September 2019. For more details, see www.egp.jo

³ Economic Policy Council, Jordan Economic Growth Plan 2018-2022, May 2018. <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/jor170691.pdf>

⁴ Online feedback from Mai Eleimat, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, September 2019. For more details, see www.egp.jo

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Issa Mahasneh, President, Jordan Open Source Association, interview by IRM researcher, 12 February 2018.

8. Adopt the Principle of Budget Disclosure in Accordance with International Standards and Promote Transparency and Financial Disclosure

Commitment Text:

This commitment seeks to raise the level of financial information disclosure by public institutions. It also corresponds with the requirements of the Jordan 2025 document in respect to broadening the scope of financial disclosure to include municipalities, universities, Aqaba Authority and state-owned companies.

Objective: Increase the level of transparency and publication of financial statements and data.

Brief description: Issue executive instructions by the Government to oblige governmental institutions to publish financial data, including the publication of aggregated governmental accounts.

Milestones:

1. Aggregated government accounts published for 2015 to increase transparency and financial disclosure according to the Council of Minister’s decisions published in the Official Gazette (Issue 5411).
2. Governmental instructions issued to all governmental institutions mandating they submit a regular timetable for disclosing their financial information.

Responsible institution: Ministry of Finance

Supporting institution(s): N/A

Start date: 1 January 2017

End date: 30 January 2017

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
8. Budget and financial disclosure				✓	✓						✓					✓			✓		

Commitment Aim:

This commitment seeks to increase the amount and frequency of fiscal information shared by the government, as well as to improve the quality of information and financial statements to comply with international standards.

The commitment has two milestones: a) publishing the aggregated government accounts for 2015 and increasing the information through decisions published in the Official Gazette (information from central government institutions and governmental units, aggregated revenues and external grants, aggregate expenditures, central government and governmental units’ aggregated financial deficit and

detailed budget articles); and b) issuing governmental instructions to all government institutions so that they submit a regular timetable for disclosing financial information.

Status

Midterm: Complete

This commitment was fully completed during the first year of implementation. The IRM researcher confirmed that the Ministry of Finance published the aggregated government accounts for 2015 in May 2017 and that they are available in Arabic on the Information page of the Ministry's official website (milestone 8.1). The newly-published information includes economic descriptions and a summary of the budget in different formats in accordance with international standards. The aggregated deficit document on the Ministry of Finance's website presents the total deficit and its explanation (milestone 8.2). It also explains how the budget services the deficit.¹

End of term: Completed

There were no further updates on this commitment since the mid-term report.

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Marginal

This commitment contributed to a marginal improvement in access to information. Previously, the publication of budget information related to government ministries and government units was produced separately but not aggregated. As a result of this commitment, there has been an increase in the quality of published information from central government institutions and governmental units on budget deficit, cumulative budget deficit, and expenditure information for a few government entities. Nonetheless, according to the International Budget Partnership, there is no comparison of the final expenditures against allocations in the budget for public corporations. Moreover, the final accounts and aggregated government accounts of the budget lack a narrative explanation of the deviations and information on macroeconomic data (debt, GDP, inflation rate, interest rates).²

Carried Forward?

This commitment was not carried forward into the next action plan. If included in future action plans, the IRM researcher recommends framing commitments around international best practices by providing narrative explanations of fiscal deviations and including macroeconomic data in support of relevant analyses.

¹ Ministry of Finance, Aggregated Deficit, <https://bit.ly/2Lr4tlb>

² Suad Hasan, International Budget Partnership, email interview, 12 March 2019.

9. Develop Transparent and Participatory Policies Regarding Climate Change

Commitment Text:

The Jordanian Government seeks to participate with the international community and its neighboring states in establishing the needed mechanisms to combat the emission of greenhouse gases which cause climate change through the formulation and adoption of local policies in cooperation with the civil society and the public at large.

Objective: Address climate change, its effects and means for adaptation in all services provided to the public.

Brief description: Develop operational policies on the national level to determine the effect of climate changes on Jordan and to address it in an appropriate manner.

Milestones:

1. Policies developed based on international best practices through cooperation with scientific and research centers in Jordan in accordance with the Climate Change Policy of 2013.
2. Knowledge made available to citizens through the publication of relevant information, in a manner that facilitates its comprehension, by cooperating with the daily newspapers and other media outlets and through strengthening the framework governing the national publication of the national notification on the emission of greenhouse gases in Jordan.
3. Requisite legislative measures defined, in collaboration with the Parliament, related to prevention.

Responsible institution: Ministry of Environment

Supporting institution(s): Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Environment Police, Public Security Department (Vehicles Registry), Ministry of Health, Jordanian Meteorological Department, Royal Scientific Society, Ministry of Transportation, Greater Amman Municipality, Ministry of Water and Irrigation, Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature, National Center for Agriculture Research and Guidance, Hashemite University, Aqaba Special Zone Authority, Department for Public Statistic, and the Jordan Environment Society

Start date: 30 September 2017

End date: 3 June 2018

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact			Completion		Midterm		Did It Open Government?						
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding	
9. Participatory policies on climate change		✓			✓	✓				✓			✓						✓			

Commitment Aim:

This commitment seeks to formulate and adopt climate change-related policies in cooperation with civil society and the public at large. The proposal is to adopt national policies, tailored specifically to Jordan, to confront the impacts of climate change. As stated in the different milestones, this includes facilitating access to information about raising awareness on climate change and protecting the environment, as well as including the cooperation of scientific and research communities in the development of policies.

Status

Midterm: Limited

This commitment was completed to a limited extent as some progress was made but none of the three milestones were completed by the midterm. According to the social media websites of the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry held discussion groups and developed policies with CSOs and universities (milestone 9.1).¹ However, these policies were not submitted to the IRM researcher. The Ministry released a mobile game for children called “Eco Champ” to educate them on the issue of climate change, which is available in the Google Play store and Apple App Store (milestone 9.2). According to the Ministry’s website, cleaning and tree planting campaigns were also conducted.² The Ministry has published videos discussing climate change policies as well as carrying out plays in Amman and Irbid.

Regarding milestone 3, legislative measures, such as the Environmental Protection Act from 2006 which was updated in 2017, and the regulations and instructions are currently being prepared (milestone 9.3).

End of term: Limited

The commitment was completed to a limited extent as most of the milestones are still in the process of being implemented. According to the Ministry of Environment’s focal point for this commitment, the Ministry conducted awareness-raising campaigns on the harmful environmental and health effects of gas emissions on the population and the environment. However, the Ministry is still working on establishing a port on its website to show the increase or decrease of greenhouse gas emissions. This port will allow people to submit complaints if they have witnessed anything that would harmfully increase gas emissions, such as the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, or harmful emissions from factories or public buses (milestones 9.2).³

The Ministry of Environment, in partnership with OECD, are working on producing a bylaw that governs the issues of environmental pollution and greenhouse emissions, as well as a report which will include recommendations for solutions and best practices to be used in the future (milestone 9.1). Moreover, the Ministry of Environment submitted official letters and correspondence to the Parliament to kickstart the process for delivering a change in the legislative laws regarding the prevention of greenhouse emissions, but they were only allowed to submit it as a bylaw (milestone 9.3).

When interviewed by the IRM researcher, the OGP point of contact in Jordan expressed that the Ministry of Environment is a supervisory authority and, as such, it is not responsible for changing legislation regarding these issues.⁴ He also stated that the milestones should have been more specific to the core mandate of the Ministry (such as milestone 2 which intended to raise awareness of national and global environmental issues). As for the other milestones, he explained that they will only be partially completed as they are not fully in the hands of the Ministry.

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Marginal

Civic Participation: Marginal

Previously, there were no climate change-related policies related to the scale this commitment seeks to address. This commitment has marginally increased civic participation and access to information as part of awareness-raising campaigns and the elaboration of a report with recommendations and best practices. Despite these efforts, their results remain minor in terms of opening the government.

At the moment of writing this report, no new opportunities have been created for the public to inform or influence decisions related to climate change policies; the tool for gas emissions is still being developed by the Ministry of Environment. Moreover, regarding the tool for citizens to submit complaints, this option only marginally increases civic participation, as previously to implementation of this commitment, the Ministry already had a website for submitting complaints in general, though not specifically related to gas emissions. Finally, according to the Jordanian Association for the Protection of Land and Humans,⁵ more participatory activities could have been introduced in addition to raising awareness in local communities and civil society institutions.

Carried Forward?

This commitment was not carried forward into the next action plan. Future commitments related to climate and environment in Jordan could seek to improve access to data, transparency, and public participation mechanisms in the creation and implementation of climate policies.⁶ The IRM researcher also recommends raising awareness on the implementation of the *National Green Growth Plan for Jordan*, published by the Ministry of Environment in 2017.⁷

¹ Bilal Shaqqarin, Ministry of Environment, telephone interview, 5 December 2017.

² Ministry of Environment, Greenhouse gas emissions port, <http://moenv.gov.jo/AR/Pages/mainpage.aspx>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Bilal Shaqqarin, interview by IRM Researcher, 29 October 2018.

⁵ Mohammed Aref Leho, the Jordanian Association for the Protection of Land and Human, interview by IRM researcher, 18 December 2017.

⁶ OGP, Environment and Climate, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/policy-area/environment-climate/>

⁷The National Green Growth Plan for Jordan, <https://www.greengrowthknowledge.org/sites/default/files/A%20National%20Green%20Growth%20Plan%20for%20Jordan.pdf>.

10. Implement an Open Data Sources Policy

Commitment Text:

By implementing the open data sources policy, The Jordanian Government seeks to facilitate access to data under the government's possession unless it is considered confidential information or a violation of privacy. Such information shall be offered freely and with no cost to its users according to a set of clear and precise conditions.

Objective: Work towards achieving transparency, enhance confidence in the government's performance and provide pioneers with the opportunity to innovate in the area of services development. Increase the participation of civil society in policy- and decision-making process.

Brief description: Implement the open data sources policy within the government and its various institutions, and evaluate the quality of data provided.

Milestones:

1. Joint committee formed for the government's open data sources comprised of representatives from the Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology, relevant stakeholders and civil society organizations.
2. Policy drafted governing the provision of open data sources for discussion with stakeholders including representatives of civil society.
3. Draft of final policies completed and submitted for approval to the Council of Ministers.
4. Standards announced and published for the government's disclosure of open data sources including the methods used to collect, process and store such data.
5. Tools developed and published to measure the quality of available open data sources, and related periodical reports published.
6. Program designed to measure the government departments' capabilities in publishing government's open data sources. Capacity building program implemented based on the program's assessment results.

Responsible institution: Ministry of Information and Communications Technology

Supporting institution(s): Jordan Open Source Society (CSO)

Start date: September 2016

End date: 30 December 2018

	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
Commitment Overview																					
10. Open Data			✓		✓			✓					✓			✓					✓

Commitment Aim:

This commitment seeks to make data in the possession of the Jordanian government more open and accessible to the public, by offering it freely and at no cost. The commitment proposes the implementation of an open data sources policy within government institutions, with a qualitative assessment of the provided data.

Status

Midterm: Limited

This commitment was completed to a limited extent as four out of six milestones were completed (milestones 1, 2, 3 and 4) by the midterm progress report. In the first year of implementation, the government formed a multi-stakeholder joint committee which includes CSO, government, academic, and private sector representatives (milestone 10.1).¹ A policy governing the provision of open data sources was drafted (milestone 10.2). The government provided the researcher with a copy of the Open Government Data Policy, which had not been officially published at the time. To draft the policy, the government first held discussions with stakeholders, as well as a workshop with the Jordan Open Source Association. The Ministry of Information and Communication Technology then submitted the policy for public consultation. The draft of the final policies was completed and submitted for approval to the Council of Ministers (milestone 10.3). Additionally, the announcement and publication of the standards for the government's disclosure of open data sources, including the methods used to collect, process and store such data, was confirmed (milestone 10.4).²

End of term: Complete

The second year of implementation has brought tangible results. The Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MoICT) developed tools to evaluate the quality of available open data sources in addition to publishing periodical reports (milestone 10.5).³ They also designed programs to measure the government departments' ability to publish governmental open data sources, basing the implemented capacity-building program on the program's assessment results (milestone 10.6). The MoICT considered the drafted data quality and evaluation criteria, taking into account accuracy, suitability, accessibility, and legal compliance, as per international standards. These considerations were reflected in the Instructions of Open Government Data after the completion of the Open Data Pilot Project.⁴

In mid-2016, with the start of the commitment, the MoICT conducted open data awareness workshops for about 45 government entities, to evaluate the availability and status of government data. Using the results, the MoICT conducted workshops for focal points of each government entity on how to use the open data government platform to publish the available data sources. Finally, the MoICT conducted a citizenship survey to understand the prioritization and selection of datasets to be released. The survey was disseminated through multiple channels including MoICT website and social media, Jordan portal and social media, private sector broadcast emails by INTAJ, and through Open Government Week activities by Rased-Hayat Center.⁵

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Major

Technology & Innovation: Major

Prior to this commitment the government did not have a public policy on open data sources. Since implementation of this commitment, there has been a major change in government openness as the implementation process provided the basis and support for different government agencies to publish data and increase access to information. The commitment oversaw the development and publication of an Open Data Sources policy, which included the contributions of civil society stakeholders, such as the Jordan Open Source Association and the ICT Association of Jordan - Int@j. These organizations attended multi-stakeholder meetings organized by the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology and provided feedback and contributions. The MoICT also created and

disseminated public surveys to assess the data priorities of stakeholders. The IRM researcher verified that 54 surveys were completed and submitted by citizens.⁶ As a result, the commitment also ended up fostering openness with respect to citizen participation, as different stakeholders, including government, civil society, academic, and private sector representatives, could express their priorities and give comments on the Open Data Source policy. Finally, the MoICT conducted research to assess the current landscape, and a capacity-building program for government entities was developed based on the assessment and feedback. Although the reform is still awaiting the approval of the Prime Minister's Cabinet, this commitment has opened government in a major way as it has laid the groundwork for the implementation of open data and information disclosure in Jordan and has taken into account the priorities and feedback of different stakeholders.

Carried Forward?

This commitment was carried forward into the fourth action plan and its main purpose is to build on this commitment which established an open data sources policy. Once the public policy is approved, the commitment intends to ensure its implementation through different means, such as conducting an awareness-raising campaign and improving public officials' technical skills. It also includes a component to develop a measurement and an evaluation method for the data shared by the government.

The IRM researcher recommends including relevant civil society stakeholders and ultimate beneficiaries of this commitment, both in the development and implementation phases. It also recommends working on a strategy that promotes data publishing standards and ensures that data will be shared in well-structured machine-readable formats, with clear metadata, and avoiding the release of personal information. The MoICT could also establish actions to ensure the reuse of data and the compliance of government institutions.

¹ The members are: Abd Alqader Aatayneh, the Director of Policy at the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology; Ahmed Abu Amara, the Director of the E-Government Program; Nada Khater, the Head of E-Government Strategies Section; and Batoul Al-Issa, the Head of Operations in E-Government. There are also delegates from the Royal Scientific Society of Jordan, the National Information Technology Center, the Department of Statistics and the Ministry of Planning. There are also three non-governmental representatives: one from the academic sector and the private sector and a legal advisor, Moatasem Nasir. The government provided the IRM researcher with an official letter verifying the formation of the committee, although they were waiting for confirmation from all parties involved.

² The standards have been published with the rest of the new open data policy and can be found on page 7 of the Open Data Sources policy book.

³ MoICT open data sources, <https://data.jordan.gov.jo>

⁴ The instructions were published after the commitment due date, <http://moict.gov.jo/uploads/Policies-and-Strategies-Directorate/Legislation/Instructions/legislation-gov-data.pdf>

⁵ Verification was provided to the IRM researcher on 2 September 2018. A copy of the survey, <http://bit.ly/2WO0tee>

⁶ The Official Site of the Jordanian e-Government, Open Data, <https://jordan.gov.jo/wps/portal/OpenData?lang=en&isFromLangChange=yes#/manageDataSets>

Methodological Note

The end-of-term report is based on desk research and interviews with governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. The IRM report builds on the findings of the government's self-assessment report; other assessments of progress produced by civil society,¹ the private sector, international organizations², and the previous IRM progress report.

Partners-Jordan for Civic Collaboration is a member of the global Partners Network. Partners-Jordan works to achieve better civic collaboration and social accountability in Jordan as well as using innovative ways to face the closing of civic spaces in the MENA region. Contributions to this report were also provided by Sanah Yassin, Mais Nimri, Malikul Muhamad, and Ethan Mayer-Rich.

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, to empower citizens, to fight corruption, and to harness new technologies to strengthen governance. OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism assesses development and implementation of national action plans to foster dialogue among stakeholders and to improve accountability.



¹ <http://elections.rasedjo.org/en>, accessed 28 March 2019.

² OECD, Open government, <http://www.oecd.org/gov/open-government.htm>