

Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Armenia Transitional Results Report 2018– 2020

This report was prepared in collaboration with Tatevik Margaryan, Independent Researcher

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This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union. IRM assessments are conducted independently in collaboration with country researchers, reviewed by IRM staff and overseen by the International Experts Panel (IEP) to safeguard independence, objectiveness and evidence-based research.



I. Introduction

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a global partnership that brings together government reformers and civil society leaders to create action plans that make governments more inclusive, responsive, and accountable. Action plan commitments may build on existing efforts, identify new steps to complete ongoing reforms, or initiate an entirely new area. OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) monitors all action plans to ensure governments follow through on commitments. Civil society and government leaders use the evaluations to reflect on their progress and determine if efforts have impacted people's lives.

The IRM has partnered with Tatevik Margaryan, independent researcher, to carry out this evaluation. The IRM aims to inform ongoing dialogue around the development and implementation of future commitments. For a full description of the IRM's methodology, please visit <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/about/independent-reporting-mechanism>.

This report covers the implementation of Armenia's fourth action plan for 2018–2020. In 2021, the IRM will implement a new approach to its research process and the scope of its reporting on action plans, approved by the IRM Refresh.¹ The IRM adjusted its Implementation Reports for 2018–2020 action plans to fit the transition process to the new IRM products and enable the IRM to adjust its workflow in light of the COVID-19 pandemic's effects on OGP country processes.

¹ For more information, see "IRM Refresh," Open Government Partnership, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/process/accountability/about-the-irm/irm-refresh/>.

II. Action Plan Implementation

The IRM Transitional Results Report assesses the status of the action plan's commitments and the results from their implementation at the end of the action plan cycle. This report does not re-visit the assessments for "Verifiability," "Relevance" or "Potential Impact." The IRM assesses those three indicators in IRM Design Reports. For more details on each indicator, please see Annex I in this report.

2.1. General highlights and results

Among the 11 commitments in Armenia's fourth OGP action plan (2018–2020), seven saw either substantial or complete implementation. This was a slight improvement from the results of the previous action plan (2016–2018), in which four out of eight commitments were substantially or completely implemented.¹ One reason for this positive progress is that some of the commitments were already on the government's agenda. For example, Commitment 3, on beneficial ownership disclosure, was an extension of the government's commitment regarding transparent ownership of mining companies under the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

The ability to secure financial resources constituted another decisive factor in successful implementation, while lack of resources served as a main reason for limited implementation of Commitment 7 on social services. The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic also slowed decision-making processes and awareness-raising activities, as the government reshuffled priorities. In addition, in contrast to Armenia's previous action plans, many commitments in the fourth plan incorporated legislative amendments. The law mandated these be posted online for public consultation, thus providing more possibilities for public input beyond multistakeholder forum (Working Group) participation.

The changes achieved through the fourth action plan are mostly relevant to access to information. Notably, Commitment 3 saw the development of a beneficial ownership register, which the government piloted for mining companies in the country. Moving forward, the government plans to expand the mandatory disclosure requirement to cover a larger scope of Armenian companies. It also plans to publish the data in a machine-readable open format. Commitment 8 resulted in a new platform that provides information on all schools and the opportunity to leave feedback. It also enables online enrollment in schools, which could significantly reduce the existing prevalence of informal and corrupt mechanisms of enrollment.

Other commitments saw improvement to civic participation opportunities. For example, Commitment 10 resulted in the creation of an online platform for citizens to submit petitions, while Commitment 11 saw the creation of a pilot dashboard for citizens to provide feedback on state-provided services. The impact of all these commitments has yet to be seen. Most require large public awareness-raising campaigns and further monitoring to ensure full implementation and/or usage and assess more tangible results.

By the end of the action plan, commitments to develop a database on water resources (Commitment 5) and a land cadastre (Commitment 6) had seen only limited completion. Thus, they did not result in significant changes in access to information. The Ministry of Environment created the water database and populated it with approximately 85 percent of the necessary information. However, technical delays linked to COVID-19 prevented full interoperability between the databases of various state agencies. In addition, at the time of writing this report, there are no ongoing processes to make the water database open for public access. For Commitment 6, the Cadastre Committee completed most of the data input for the land cadastre, but the connection to and input from other databases is still in progress.

2.2. COVID-19 Pandemic impact on implementation

The COVID-19 pandemic moderately affected implementation of the action plan in 2020, as some milestone activities were delayed. For example, approval of the amendments to state grant procedure, public awareness raising for the health platform, and completion of the water cadastre database were

delayed due to the pandemic. The pandemic also prevented the OGP Working Group from meeting in 2020, which coincided with the second year of the action plan's implementation period.

The e-government platforms, including those set up within current and previous OGP action plans, have gained increased attention and usage during the pandemic. The education and health platforms set up in the framework of the current action plan (Commitments 8 and 9, respectively) were particularly timely. They enable citizens to obtain information on and sign up for public services in those sectors while minimizing face-to-face communication.

In the context of open government values, COVID-19 brought challenges for public participation and access to information. Civil society organizations had to limit their engagement to participating in online platforms and issuing statements, while being deprived of consultative bodies, hearings, protests, and other participation channels. The government proactively published little information in the first month of the pandemic, and it delayed responses to many information requests.² Later, the Ministry of Health established a special information platform to provide information on COVID-19 and protection measures. There, it also published updates on the number of people infected, along with an interactive map of the virus' spread.³ In addition, the government published COVID-related decisions, including emergency regulations, travel restrictions, economic and social assistance programs.⁴ An emergency call center was established in March 2020 to provide immediate support to citizens and responses to questions on COVID-19.⁵

¹ Open Government Partnership, *IRM Armenia End-of-Term Report 2016–2018*, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Armenia_End-Term_Report_2016-2018_EN.pdf.

² Shushan Doydoyan, "Access to Information during COVID 19," Freedom of Information Center of Armenia, 15 May 2020, <http://www.foi.am/en/articles/item/1896/>.

³ "Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)," National Centre for Disease Control, <https://ncdc.am/coronavirus/>.

⁴ Decisions of emergency commandant, The Government of the Republic of Armenia, <https://www.gov.am/en/commandant-decisions/>; COVID-19 Travel restrictions, The Government of the Republic of Armenia, <https://www.gov.am/en/covid-travel-restrictions/>; Programs to address the economic impact of COVID-19, The Government of the Republic of Armenia, <https://www.gov.am/en/covid19/>; Programs to address the social impact of COVID-19 The Government of the Republic of Armenia, <https://www.gov.am/en/covid-19-cragrer/>

⁵ COVID-19, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, 19 March 2020, <https://www.mfa.am/en/COVID-19/2020/03/16/COVID/10144>

2.3. Early results

The IRM acknowledges that results may not be visible within the two-year time frame of the action plan and that at least a substantial level of completion is required to assess early results. For the purpose of the Transitional Results Report, the IRM will use the “**Did it Open Government?**” (DIOG) indicator to highlight early results based on the changes to government practice in areas relevant to OGP values. Moving forward, the new IRM Results Report will not continue using DIOG as an indicator.

Section 2.3 focuses on outcomes from the implementation of commitments that had an ambitious or strong design, per the IRM Design Report assessment or that may have lacked clarity and/or ambition but had successful implementation with “major” or “outstanding” changes to government practice.¹ Commitments considered for analysis in this section had at least a “substantial” level of implementation, as assessed by the IRM in Section 2.4.² While this section provides the analysis of the IRM’s findings for the commitments that meet the criteria described above, Section 2.4 includes an overview of the level of completion for all the commitments in the action plan.

Commitment 3: Beneficial ownership register	
Aim of the commitment	The commitment aimed to implement a common mechanism for identifying the real owners of companies operating in Armenia by launching a comprehensive and freely accessible register of beneficial ownership. ³ The government would pilot the new register for companies involved in the country’s mining sector before expanding it to all other companies. This register would help to identify conflicts of interest when an official owns a company, help identify monopoly situations when companies share the same ultimate owner and ensure proper tax collection by revealing offshore ownership. ⁴ This commitment was closely linked with the requirement of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) 2016 standards to disclose beneficial ownership of oil, gas, and mining companies. ⁵
Did it open government? Major	<p>In April 2019, the Parliament adopted amendments to the law on state registration in order to define beneficiary ownership and the scope of information to be included in the register.⁶ The Parliament also adopted amendments to the RA Mining Code to require disclosure of beneficial owners by mining companies.⁷</p> <p>In March 2020, the government adopted a decision on the list of beneficial ownership data subject to being published.⁸ In April 2020, mining companies began publishing information on beneficial owners on e-register.am in PDFs.⁹ Preparation of the software for open data is in process, and Armenia plans to start providing data on beneficial ownership in a machine-readable format, in accordance with the Beneficial Ownership Data Standard, in 2021.¹⁰</p> <p>As a result of this commitment’s implementation, Armenia has established the relevant legislative framework to incorporate the concept of beneficial ownership into the law on the registration of legal entities. This represents an important step toward ensuring beneficiary ownership transparency for all companies in Armenia. However, because the database software with open data and search possibilities was still in development by the end of the action plan period, the commitment is considered substantially, rather fully, implemented.</p> <p>Prior to the commitment, no publicly available and comprehensive information on the beneficial ownership of companies in Armenia existed. This commitment has resulted in the disclosure and availability to the public of more information on beneficial ownership, particularly in the country’s mining sector. However, the information on beneficial ownership is currently provided in PDFs, as scanned</p>

	<p>documents, and structured in a complicated manner. This complicated form and lack of open data format requires additional expertise and effort by users to comprehend and analyze the data.¹¹</p> <p>According to some civil society organizations (CSOs) and investigative journalists, the existing disclosure might not provide users with a comprehensive account of beneficial ownership, due to insufficient enforcement and deficiencies in the electronic system of declarations.¹² Stakeholders also mentioned concern about company shareholders intentionally breaking up shares into amounts below 10 percent—the disclosure threshold in the legal definition of beneficial ownership—to avoid disclosure requirements.¹³ Considering the current lack of open data format, the commitment has so far resulted in marginal improvements in terms of access to information on beneficial ownership. However, as mentioned above, Armenia plans to start providing the data on beneficiary ownership in machine-readable format in 2021.</p> <p>Throughout the implementation process, the government consulted with citizens on the legislative changes via the e-draft.am platform. It consulted with CSOs primarily through the EITI multistakeholder group.¹⁴ The government also engaged stakeholders through several discussions organized by its representatives, CSOs, and international organizations.¹⁵ Armenia’s EITI multistakeholder group is composed of a nearly equal number of representatives from government, business, and civil society,¹⁶ and consensus was reached for most of its decisions. According to Open Ownership, the government has actively engaged a wide range of CSOs, media representatives, and the private sector while developing beneficial ownership disclosure procedures for the mining sector pilot.¹⁷</p> <p>The government considered many suggestions from civil society when making final decisions. For example, on the new beneficial ownership register, the government lowered the threshold for disclosing shareholders from 20 percent to 10 percent, as proposed by CSOs.¹⁸ Also, the government incorporated some of the recent recommendations by CSOs in the draft amendments to the Law on State Registration of Legal Entities.¹⁹ These included the suggestion not to necessarily consider executive heads as beneficial owners and the suggestion for the Central Bank to define the list of credible securities exchanges.²⁰ Furthermore, the government considered suggestions on technical issues through the process of developing the software for the open data format of public beneficial ownership information.²¹ Considering the high levels of engagement with civil society during the implementation of the register, the commitment had improved civic participation in a major way.</p>
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Commitment 8: Unified Information System for Management of Education

<p>Aim of the commitment</p>	<p>This commitment aimed to provide comprehensive multilevel information on educational institutions and facilitate the school enrollment process through a unified education management system. Having public information on the number of available enrollment spots in a school (according to its license), along with the ability to enroll online, could reduce the possibility of informal and corrupt mechanisms of enrollment. The commitment also entailed creating a feedback mechanism on the platform and authorized state institutions would follow up as needed on the feedback received.</p>
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<p>Did it open government?</p> <p>Marginal</p>	<p>The education management platform administered by the National Center of Educational Technologies (under the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport) is available at https://emis.am. It includes sections covering management information systems for all educational institutions in Armenia (preschools, schools, vocational and higher educational institutions) and databases on these institutions. The platform also has filtering and search possibilities, allowing users to find information and create reports based on specific criteria.</p> <p>The platform also allows for electronic enrollment in the first grade of schools without the need for a preliminary visit to the school. In 2019, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport piloted the new electronic school enrollment system in Yerevan. In 2020, the ministry made the system fully functional for almost all schools in Armenia. Electronic enrollment is available in those communities where more than one school operates. In communities with one school, all resident children are eligible to enroll, and there is no risk of rejection due to lack of enrollment spots. In 2020, the National Center of Educational Technologies piloted the online enrollment system with vocational and higher education institutions.²²</p> <p>Currently, among the databases on the platform, only the school database is fully functional, covering all state, private, primary, secondary, and high schools. For other educational establishments—including preschools, vocational and higher educational institutions—the input of data is in progress.</p> <p>The IRM Design Report mentioned the risk of limited internet and computer access for segments of the population as a possible limitation of the commitment. However, a representative of the National Center of Educational Technologies stated that no serious obstacles of this kind were reported. Enrollment is also possible through smartphones, which are available for most of Armenia’s population. In addition, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport has instructed schools to assist parents in the registration process, in case some parents are unable to do so. The ministry’s hotline serves as another option for parents to obtain assistance with the enrollment process.</p> <p>Prior to this commitment, parents enrolled children in school in Armenia through in-person interaction. This process often created opportunities for parents to use informal mechanisms (such as intermediaries) to facilitate enrollment in schools with high demand, and it allowed double registration in several schools.²³ The new electronic enrollment system helps reduce the corruption risks and represents an improvement in terms of enrollment administration compared to the situation prior to the action plan.</p> <p>As a result of the commitment, the government also made new information publicly available in a format that allows citizens to easily search by several parameters to find information on schools. Parents can use this information and so can researchers and organizations working in the field of education. Users can collect statistical information on school infrastructure, building conditions, proportion of teachers and schoolchildren, and many other areas. However, the data on other education establishments besides schools is not accessible yet.</p> <p>According to the representative of the National Center of Educational Technologies, the average number of site visits reaches 40,000 to 45,000 per month. Many parents provide online feedback, mostly about technical issues concerning enrollment steps and requests for confirmation. The government considered some of the feedback to improve the platform’s features and</p>
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	<p>registration requirements. For example, it added an option to receive a notification on registration via SMS (instead of email), and it displays the number of available enrollment spots in the first grades of schools in search results.²⁴ Thus, this commitment resulted in marginal progress in both civic participation and access to information.</p>
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Commitment 10: Platform for Submitting Petitions	
Aim of the commitment	<p>The commitment aimed to develop a unified electronic platform for submitting petitions. According to the Armenian Constitution, everyone has a right to submit a petition to state and local self-government bodies and officials, and any petition must be examined and responded to if there are no reasons for rejection. The platform of electronic petitions aimed to facilitate the process of submitting petitions and getting supporters as necessary. Such petitions can be used not only to solve specific issues but also to propose draft laws or initiate a referendum.</p>
<p>Did it open government?</p> <p>Major</p>	<p>The Ministry of Justice conducted a study of the international practice in 2018 and developed the terms of reference for the electronic platform for submitting petitions. The ministry based the terms on the study findings and the provision of the RA Law on Petitions.²⁵ The Ministry of Justice has developed amendments to the Law on Petitions based on suggestions provided by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. These amendments aim to incorporate the concept and details regarding the electronic platform. The ministry presented the draft amendments for public discussions in July 2020²⁶ and the Parliament adopted them on 24 March 2021.²⁷ Between June and August 2020, the e-Governance Infrastructure Implementation Unit (EKENG CJSC), in coordination with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, piloted the new platform http://e-petition.am/, which has been fully operational since September 2020.</p> <p>The platform provides an opportunity to present petitions; collect supporters' signatures, in case the petition is public; and get responses from relevant state institutions. When this report was written, the platform featured five collective and four individual petitions, and six of them had already received responses. Most of the responses presented information on the current regulations of the issue (some with detailed explanation). Responses also mentioned that the issues raised in the petition would be further considered in discussion of relevant legal acts and decisions. For example, in response to the petition calling to set a ban on the free sale of fireworks and pyrotechnical materials, the government provided a list of related legislative acts and mentioned that incorporation of relevant regulations on pyrotechnics sales into these acts was planned.</p> <p>The citizen initiating the petition chooses whether it and the responses are published. A review of the responses published on the platform shows that the relevant decision makers at state institutions have considered most of the issues raised. The main factor contributing to low usage of the platform might be the requirement to register with an ID card and to provide an electronic signature when submitting a petition. These features are not accessible to the majority of Armenia's population.²⁸ Currently, the government is discussing the possibility of replacing these identification mechanisms with more accessible tools.²⁹ Lack of large public awareness activities, which have been postponed at the moment, also contributes to low usage.</p>

	<p>Armenian citizens and civil society organizations often use international petition platforms (such as change.org) to promote their causes. Civil society and the government expect the new e-petition platform to serve as a substitute for these platforms when addressing domestic issues. For this reason—and because feedback from relevant state bodies is mandatory—civil society and government stakeholders found this commitment to be an important step toward strengthening both public participation and direct democracy.³⁰</p> <p>Prior to this commitment, citizens wishing to submit petitions had to collect the required number of signatures by hand and submit the documents to the government as hard copies. The new electronic platform has significantly simplified this process and makes it more feasible to mobilize supporters for petitions, considering the wide possibilities of dissemination via social networks and other electronic channels. Given the opportunities the platform provides citizens—and the potential for its further usage by revising the existing identification schemes—this commitment has led to a major advancement regarding civic participation.</p>
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¹ IRM Design Reports identified strong commitments as “noteworthy commitments” if they were assessed as verifiable and relevant and had “transformative” potential impact. If no commitments met the potential impact threshold, the IRM researcher selected noteworthy commitments from the commitments with “moderate” potential impact. For the list of Armenia’s noteworthy commitments, see the executive summary of the 2018–2020 IRM Design Report:

https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Armenia_Design-Report_2018-2020_EN.pdf.

² The following commitments assessed as noteworthy in Armenia’s IRM Design Report are not included in this section because they saw limited implementation. Thus, there is not enough progress to assess results: Commitment 5: State Water Cadastre and Commitment 6: Land Cadastre.

³ Government of the Republic of Armenia, *Decision N 1307-L of November 15th 2018, on Approving the Fourth Action Plan of Open Government Partnership Initiative of the Republic of Armenia*, November 2018, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Armenia_Action-Plan_2018-2020_EN.doc.

⁴ Open Government Partnership, *IRM: Armenia Design Report 2018-2020*, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Armenia_Design-Report_2018-2020_EN.pdf.

⁵ “2.5 Beneficial Ownership,” EITI Standard: 2019, Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, <https://eiti.org/document/standard#r2-5>.

⁶ “RA Law on State Registration of Legal Entities, State-Record Registration of the Separated Subdivisions of Legal Entities, Institutions and Private Entrepreneurs,” dated 23 April 2019, Armenian Legal Information System, <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?docid=130252>.

⁷ “RA Law on Making Supplements and Amendments to the RA Subsoil Code,” dated 23 April 2019, Armenian Legal Information System, <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?docid=130250>.

⁸ “Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia on the Definition of the List of Data Subject to Publication (Provision) in the Declaration of Beneficiary Owners,” dated 26 March 2020, Armenian Legal Information System, <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=140718>.

⁹ “Declarations on Beneficiary Ownership,” EITI Armenia, <https://www.eiti.am/hy/ԻՄ-հայտարարագրեր/?tab=88>.

¹⁰ Lusine Tovmasyan (EITI Armenia), interview by IRM researcher, 14 November 2020.

¹¹ Kristine Aghalaryan (Hetq), interview by IRM researcher, 12 November 2020.

¹² Kristine Aghalaryan, “Armenia’s Metal Mines: Russian Businessmen Pocket Lion’s Share of Profits,” *Hetq*, 6 June 2020, <https://hetq.am/en/article/117849>; and Civil Society Constituency of EITI MSG, *Recommendations: On Solutions of Certain Issues Identified during the Process of Disclosure of Beneficial Owners of Mining Companies*, 16 June 2020, <https://transparency.am/files/publications/1592292171-0-852077.pdf?v=4>.

¹³ According to the *OGP Global Report on beneficial ownership* (https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Global-Report_Beneficial-Ownership.pdf, page 13), most OGP countries have a 25 percent share threshold for mandatory reporting. Thus, a 10 percent threshold is rather low and was implemented to help identify a sufficiently large scope of beneficiary owners. However, in the case of the company that exploits Amulsar mining (which was a matter of hot debates and civic activism initiatives in recent years), the commitment did not help to disclose the shareholders of the company, as they had less than 10 percent of its shares.

¹⁴ “Minutes and Related Documents,” EITI Armenia, <https://www.eiti.am/en/agenda-protocols-other-related-documents/>.

¹⁵ Information on some of these events can be found here: “Legal Regulations Envisaged for Revealing Real Owners Considered,” Republic of Armenia Ministry of Justice, 31 January 2019, <https://www.moj.am/en/article/2240>; and “Progress on Beneficial Ownership Transparency in Armenia Was Presented,” Transparency International Anticorruption Center, 29 October 2019, <https://transparency.am/en/news/view/2904>. See also Open Ownership, *Beneficial Ownership Transparency in Armenia: Scoping Study*, August 2020, <https://www.openownership.org/uploads/armenia-scoping-report.pdf>.

¹⁶ “MSG Composition,” EITI Armenia, <https://www.eiti.am/en/MSG-composition>.

¹⁷ Open Ownership, *Beneficial Ownership Transparency*.

¹⁸ Lusine Tovmasyan interview.

¹⁹ Civil Society Constituency of EITI MSG, *Recommendations*.

²⁰ “RA Draft Law on Amendments to the RA Law on State Registration of Legal Entities, Separate Subdivisions of Legal Entities, Institutions and Private Entrepreneurs,” Unified Website for Publishing Draft Legal Acts, <https://www.e-draft.am/en/projects/2818>.

²¹ Lusine Tovmasyan interview.

²² Application System, <https://dimord.emis.am/>.

²³ Open Government Partnership, *IRM: Armenia Design Report 2018–2020*, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Armenia_Design-Report_2018-2020_EN.pdf.

²⁴ Artak Poghosyan (National Center of Educational Technologies), interview by IRM researcher, 12 November 2020.

²⁵ Electronic communication with Anna Harutyunyan (Ministry of Justice), 11 December 2020.

²⁶ “Draft Amendments and Supplements to the RA Law ‘On Petitions,’” Unified Website for Publishing Draft Legal Acts, <https://www.e-draft.am/projects/2609>.

²⁷ RA Law on Amendments and Supplements to the RA Law ‘On Petitions’, dated 24 March 2021, Armenian Legal Information System, <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?docid=151235>.

²⁸ According to the information provided to the IRM researcher by EKENG cjsc, approximately 1.2 million citizens of Armenia have ID cards, and about 160,000 of them have ever activated digital signatures (electronic communication with Araks Avetyan, EKENG cjsc, 13 April 2021). For more information, see Open Government Partnership, *IRM: Armenia Design Report 2018–2020*, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Armenia_Design-Report_2018-2020_EN.pdf

²⁹ Suren Krmoyan (Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia), interview by IRM researcher, 13 November 2020.

³⁰ Open Government Partnership, *IRM: Armenia Design Report 2018–2020*, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Armenia_Design-Report_2018-2020_EN.pdf.

2.4. Commitment implementation

The table below includes an assessment of the level of completion for each commitment in the action plan.

Commitment	Completion: <i>(no evidence available, not started, limited, substantial or complete)</i>
1. “Open Data” in Official Declarations	<p>Substantial</p> <p>In July 2020, the government cabinet approved amendments to enlarge the scope of declarants and the content of declarations. In September 2020, the Parliament passed the amendments in the first reading.¹ The Parliament finally adopted the amendments on 19 January 2021.² On 12 March 2020, the government adopted Decision N 306-N, which expanded the list of data to be published. Such data now includes information on the other party of the declared transaction (such as purchase of property or receiving a gift).³</p> <p>The Corruption Prevention Committee published on its website a list of officials who did not submit declarations on time, along with the information on sanctions applied to these officials. This committee replaced the Commission on Ethics of High-Ranking Officials in late 2019.⁴ The committee developed terms of reference for a new system for the registry of declarations.⁵ However, it has not been implemented yet and is pending government approval and funding.⁶</p>
2. Government Grant Transparency	<p>Limited</p> <p>The Ministry of Finance developed an amendment to the government decision on state granting procedure. The ministry posted the amendment for public discussion in late 2019 and presented it to the government for approval in 2020.⁷ The government eventually adopted the decision on the amended procedure on 27 January 2021, after the end of the action plan implementation period (August 2020).⁸ The amended procedure does not include any unified package of application form and other attachments. The adopted decision states that the instructions for applying will be provided in the grant competition announcement, while the Ministry of Finance will develop the sample competition documents and publish them on its website. A review of the ministries’ websites by the IRM researcher showed that not all of them have published the reports on competition results and grant projects.⁹</p>
3. Beneficial Ownership Register	<p>Substantial</p> <p>For details regarding the implementation and early results of this commitment, see Section 2.3.</p>
4. Modernization of Community Websites	<p>Substantial</p> <p>In January 2020, the Parliament adopted legislation to expand the scope of information on the websites of communities and to publish drafts of local legislative acts in communities with populations over 20,000. Moreover, the amendments would extend the requirement to have a website to include all communities starting 1 January 2022. (Currently, only communities with a population exceeding 3,000 are required to maintain a website.)¹⁰</p> <p>The amendments require communities to provide information on institutions (including budgets), services provided, publicly funded construction, community property, and the number and types of permits issued. Community websites are now upgraded to provide space for the information required by these amendments. The new subsections added to the websites cover information on</p>

	<p>community educational, cultural, and other institutions; permits issued; draft community legal acts; and details regarding municipal services, such as the fees, terms, and procedures of provision.</p> <p>However, a review of the community websites by the IRM researcher showed that not all communities publish all information required by law. Particularly, many communities did not post information on the number of permits, budgets of community institutions, and construction carried out.¹¹</p> <p>The Information Systems Development and Training Center develops and provides technical assistance for community information systems under the coordination of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure. The center provided guidelines to the local self-government bodies, explaining the newly required features of the websites.¹² Though the ministry executed no public awareness-raising campaigns, it did post a video message on community websites to make known how citizens could electronically submit applications, inquiries, or other types of requests to their communities.¹³ The TV series “Life in the consolidated communities” (broadcasted on Public TV from January to February 2021) presented the achievements and opportunities of the community consolidation process. It also included a message on the electronic tools used for service delivery in communities.¹⁴</p>
<p>5. State Water Cadastre</p>	<p>Limited</p> <p>According to the Ministry of Environment representative responsible for the commitment, by the end of the action plan period, the database on water resources included approximately 85 percent of the information available from the ministry. This represents significant progress compared to the baseline of 10 percent, but the database has not been made available to the public. The database includes information on the volume, quality, flow, pollution, and usage of water resources, by water source (including surface and underground water). However, technical issues and delays linked to COVID-19 prevented the full interoperability between the databases of various state agencies. There are no plans yet to make the database publicly accessible anytime soon.¹⁵</p>
<p>6. Land Cadastre</p>	<p>Limited</p> <p>By the end of the action plan period, the Cadastre Committee had completed most of the data input for the land cadastre. However, the connection to and input from other databases is still in progress. As a next step, the Cadastre Committee plans to provide state institutions with access to the database.¹⁶ The timeline of the commitment in the action plan extends to 2022.¹⁷ Thus, it is expected that the database will become publicly available in the coming years, after necessary legislative changes are developed and adopted.</p>
<p>7. Access to Integrated Social Services</p>	<p>Limited</p> <p>By the end of the action plan period, the National Institute of Labour and Social Research, under the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, had mapped the organizations that currently provide social services. However, the esocial.am platform is not currently operational because of financial issues. At its meeting on 24 July 2019, the Working Group decided to merge the platform intended for scoring social services with the citizen feedback dashboard under Commitment II in this action plan.¹⁸</p>
<p>8. Unified Information System for Management of Education</p>	<p>Substantial</p> <p>For details regarding the implementation and early results of this commitment, see Section 2.3.</p>

9. Exploring Medical Assistance Program	Substantial <p>The Ministry of Health has improved the information on available funding by medical institutions and type of assistance by providing contact details and location of institutions on the armed.am website.¹⁹ The new enlisting system allows users to register on a wait list of preferred medical institution by inputting the doctor’s electronic referral number. Since 1 April 2020, doctor referrals have been provided electronically, and the enlisting has been carried out only through the electronic platform. As a first step, the enlisting has been implemented by the doctors who provided the referral based on the patient’s preferences. Due to COVID-19, the government postponed the planned public awareness-raising activities and feedback collection.²⁰</p>
10. Platform for Submitting Petitions	Completed <p>For details regarding the implementation and early results of this commitment, see Section 2.3.</p>
11. Public Service Dashboard	Substantial <p>The e-Governance Infrastructure Implementation Unit (EKENG CJSC), in coordination with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, set up the new public service dashboard platform, which has operated as a pilot since August 2020.²¹ By the end of the action plan period, the pilot dashboard covered only a few state-provided services, but the government plans to extend it to all public services. After receiving the service, the users get a note providing the service ID and the platform address and urging them to provide feedback in the platform. The assessment questionnaire covers service quality, duration, cost, treatment by personnel, and other indicators.²² No public awareness activities have been conducted yet.</p>

¹ “Draft History,” RA Parliament, http://parliament.am/draft_history.php?id=11922.

² “RA Law on Amendments and Supplements to the RA Law ‘On Public Service’”, dated 19 January 2021, Armenian Legal Information System, <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?docid=150019>

³ “RA Government Decision No 306-N on Defining the List of Data Included in Official Declarations That Will Be Published (Provided) and Dismissing RA Government Decision No 1835-N Dated 15 December 2011,” dated 12 March 2020, Armenia Legal Information System, <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=145444>.

⁴ “Administrative Proceedings Have Been Initiated,” CPC Armenia, 13 March 2020, <http://cpcarmenia.am/hy/news/item/2020/03/13/1231231313/>.

⁵ According to the revised version of the action plan approved in August 2019, the timeline of this commitment—and particularly the last milestone related to the declaration registry—has been extended to May 2021. RA Government, *Decision No 1130: OGP Armenia Action Plan 2018–2020*, 29 August 2019 (in Armenian), http://ogp.am/u_files/file/4th_edited_2019.pdf.

⁶ *Report on the Performance of the Commission for the Prevention of Corruption in Connection with the Fourth Action Plan of the Republic of Armenia within the Framework of the Open Government Partnership Initiative* (document provided by Lilia Afrikyan [Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia] via electronic communication, October 20, 2020).

⁷ “Draft Decision of RA Government on Amendments and Supplements to the RA Government Decision No 1937 Dated 24 December 2003 and Revocation of the RA Government Decision No 566 Dated 29 April 2010,” Unified Website for Publishing Draft Legal Acts, <https://www.e-draft.am/projects/2199/>.

⁸ “RA Government Decision No 97-N on Making Amendments and Supplements to the RA Government Decision No 1937 Dated 24 December 2003, and Revocation of the RA Government Decision No 566 Dated 29 April 2010,” dated 27 January 2021, Armenian Legal Information System, <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?docid=149496>.

⁹ For example, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport has published information on grant competitions and competition results with description of projects, but there is no information about grant project results on the respective webpage of the ministry: <https://escs.am/am/category/grantsprograms>. The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs publishes information on grant competitions and the list of organizations that won the competition on its “Announcements” page: <http://www.mlsa.am/?cat=142>. The Ministry of High-Tech Industry provides information only on grant competitions on its “Grant Programs” page: https://hti.am/main.php?lang=3&page_id=737&id=0&page_name=default. The IRM researcher could not find any grant project information on the websites of the Ministry of Economy (<https://www.mineconomy.am/>) and the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure (<http://mtad.am/>). According to a recent article from the Freedom of Information Center of Armenia, the above-mentioned ministries provided the largest amount of funding to civil society

organizations from 2018 to 2020. See “In 2018–2020, NGOs Received More Than 11 Billion Grants and Subsidies from the Ministries,” Freedom of Information Center of Armenia, 8 September 2020, <http://www.foi.am/hy/articles/item/1914/>.

¹⁰ “RA Law on Amendments to the RA Law on Local Self-Government, dated 24 January 2020, Article 1.2 and Article 4.3,” Armenian Legal Information System, <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?docid=139078>.

¹¹ The IRM researcher reviewed a random sample of 31 community websites (of 155 websites of communities with populations over 3,000), selected using a systematic sampling approach. Most of the sampled websites provided the list of community organizations with contact data, but there was no budget-related information. Only two of the 31 have published the number of permits provided. Almost all websites provided information about community property, covering general information without details on finances, leasing status, etc. As a rule, the drafts of the community council decisions were posted, some of them missing the associated annexes. The IRM researcher could not find any information on construction, as there was no relevant subsection on the websites. Three of the sampled 31 websites did not function at the time of review. The list of communities with populations over 3,000—with links to the websites—can be found at the website of Information Systems Development and Training Center, <https://infosys.am/Pages/DocFlow/Def.aspx?nt=2&dt=Sites&tv=-2>.

¹² Ashot Giloyan (Ministry of the Territorial Administration and Infrastructure), interview by IRM researcher, 10 December 2020; and Grisha Khachatryan (Information Systems Development and Training Center), interview by IRM researcher, 10 December 2020.

¹³ “How to Apply to the Municipality,” YouTube, 3 April 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGrm-0dpiFE&feature=emb_logo.

¹⁴ See, for example: “The life in the consolidated communities: Yeghvard”, Armenian Public TV, 21 January 2021, YouTube, from 8:17 to 9:33, <https://youtu.be/KbjTQ3QIQV8?t=499>

¹⁵ Edgar Pirumyan (Ministry of Environment), interview by IRM researcher, 5 November 2020.

¹⁶ Karen Grigoryan (Cadastre Committee of the Republic of Armenia), interview by IRM researcher, 5 November 2020.

¹⁷ Though the English translation of the action plan mentions December 2020 as the commitment end date, the Armenian version, which has been officially adopted, gives December 2022 (Government of the Republic of Armenia, *OGP Armenia Action Plan 2018–2020*, Armenian version, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Armenia_Action-Plan_2018-2020_ARM.doc).

¹⁸ *Brief Update on the Implementation of the Commitments Set out in the Action Plan OGP Armenia 2018–2020, Commitment 7* (document provided by Lilia Afrikyan [Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia] via electronic communication, October 20, 2020).

¹⁹ “Actually performed works, available places and waiting lists in medical organizations providing state-supported free and preferential medical care and services,” Armed, <https://www.armed.am/publicdata/?pg=govlimits>.

²⁰ Tsakhkanush Sargsyan (Ministry of Health), interview by IRM researcher, 9 November 2020.

²¹ Citizen Feedback monitoring system, <https://gnahatir.am/>.

²² Araks Avetyan (EKENG CJSC), interview by IRM researcher, 9 November 2020.

III. Multistakeholder Process

3.1 Multistakeholder process throughout action plan implementation

In 2017, OGP adopted the OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards intended to support participation and co-creation by civil society at all stages of the OGP cycle. All OGP-participating countries are expected to meet these standards. The standards aim to raise ambition and quality of participation during development, implementation, and review of OGP action plans.

OGP's Articles of Governance also establish participation and co-creation requirements a country or entity must meet in their action plan development and implementation to act according to the OGP process. Armenia **did not act** contrary to OGP process.¹ Armenia has not published the online repository yet, as a new OGP website is being developed.

Please see Section 3.2 for an overview of Armenia's performance implementing the Co-Creation and Participation Standards throughout the action plan implementation.

Table 3.1: Level of Public Influence

The IRM has adapted the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) "Spectrum of Participation" to apply it to OGP.² In the spirit of OGP, most countries should aspire to "collaborate."

Level of public influence		During development of action plan	During implementation of action plan
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		

Consultations with civil society occurred less frequently during the implementation period, compared to during the co-creation process. Three multistakeholder and OGP Working Group meetings were held in 2019: on 1 April 2019,³ 24 July 2019,⁴ and 30 October 2019.⁵ During these meetings, the government representatives responsible for specific commitments provided information on the implementation progress and responded to questions from stakeholders and Working Group members. There were no meetings in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Several open events were held regarding specific commitments, to present commitment implementation progress and collect suggestions from the public and civil society. These events included thematic meetings, small-scale events, and town hall discussions organized by Armavir Development Center;⁶ and meetings on beneficiary ownership organized by the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) multistakeholder group, Open Ownership, and civil society organizations (CSOs) working in that area.⁷ Several CSOs initiated the Open Government Data Hackathon to collect innovative ideas and high-tech solutions supporting OGP commitments on health, water, and land resource management.⁸ The point of

contact to OGP at the Office of the Prime Minister supported and/or co-organized the abovementioned events to ensure participation of interested stakeholders and to present the OGP process to the participants.

In 2020, many online discussions were organized regarding the OGP Local Program. Stakeholders from civil society and representatives from local governments from the cities of Gyumri and Vanadzor participated.⁹ During these discussions, the government point of contact to OGP presented the OGP process and the local government-related commitments implemented to date. The participants discussed the possibility of joining the OGP Local initiative and specific issues that could be addressed. Furthermore, the point of contact, representatives of the local governments, and CSOs engaged in the process filed an application to OGP Local Program. As a result, Gyumri and Vanadzor were selected for the program.

¹ Acting Contrary to Process: Country did not meet (1) “involve” during the development or “inform” during implementation of the action plan, or (2) the government fails to collect, publish and document a repository on the national OGP website/webpage in line with IRM guidance.

² “IAP2’s Public Participation Spectrum,” IAP2, 2014,

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

³ “OGP Stakeholders Meeting Was Held,” Open Government Partnership Armenia, 1 April 2019,

<http://ogp.am/en/news/item/2019/04/01/NGOs/>.

⁴ “Open Government Partnership Initiative Working Group Holds Meeting,” Open Government Partnership Armenia, 24 July 2019, http://ogp.am/en/news/item/2019/07/24/OGP_WVG_July/.

⁵ “Eduard Aghajanyan: ‘RA Government Highlights Effective Cooperation with Civil Society,’” Open Government Partnership Armenia, 30 October 2019, http://ogp.am/en/news/item/2019/10/30/WVG_meeting/.

⁶ Open Government Partnership/Armenia, Facebook, 18 October 2019,

<https://www.facebook.com/OpenGovernmentPartnershipArmenia/posts/1984094005026730>; Armavir Development Center,

Facebook, 22 October 2019, <https://www.facebook.com/armavirdc/posts/10162327211180704>; Armavir Development Center,

Facebook, 18 October 2019, <https://www.facebook.com/armavirdc/posts/10162308754635704>; Armavir Development Center,

Facebook, 22 October 2019, <https://www.facebook.com/armavirdc/posts/10162327156185704>; “Town Hall in Vanadzor on

OGP Commitments,” Open Government Partnership Armenia, 28 February 2019,

http://ogp.am/en/news/item/2019/02/28/Town_Hall_Vanadzor/; and “PKN 36: Government: Backstage,” PechaKucha Yerevan,

Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/events/2436480539806061/>.

⁷ “Minutes and Related Documents,” EITI Armenia, <https://www.eiti.am/en/agenda-protocols-other-related-documents/>; “Legal

Regulations Envisaged for Revealing Real Owners Considered,” Republic of Armenia Ministry of Justice, 31 January 2019,

<https://www.moj.am/en/article/2240>; “Progress on Beneficial Ownership Transparency in Armenia Was Presented,”

Transparency International Anticorruption Center, 29 October 2019, <https://transparency.am/en/news/view/2904>; and

“Dialogue among All Mining Stakeholders to Increase Sectorial Transparency and Accountability,” EcoLur,

<https://www.ecolur.org/en/news/mining/--/11724/>.

⁸ “Open Government Data Hackathon Kicks off in Armenia,” Public Journalism Club, 16 April 2019, [https://pjc.am/open-](https://pjc.am/open-government-data-hackathon-kicks-off-in-armenia/?lang=en)

[government-data-hackathon-kicks-off-in-armenia/?lang=en](https://pjc.am/open-government-data-hackathon-kicks-off-in-armenia/?lang=en); and Ani Harutyunyan, “Chasing after Collective Intelligence:

Crowdsourcing Widely and Wisely—Armenia,” Open Government Partnership, 28 January 2020,

<https://www.opengovpartnership.org/stories/chasing-after-collective-intelligence-crowdsourcing-widely-and-wisely-armenia/>.

⁹ Open Government Partnership/Armenia, Facebook, 15 July 2020,

<https://www.facebook.com/OpenGovernmentPartnershipArmenia/posts/2543128795789912>.

3.2 Overview of Armenia's performance throughout action plan implementation

Key:

Green= Meets standard

Yellow= In progress (steps have been taken to meet this standard, but standard is not met)

Red= No evidence of action

Multistakeholder Forum	During Development	During Implementation
1a. Forum established: The OGP Working Group, established by a prime minister's decree, oversees the implementation of the action plan. ¹	Green	Green
1b. Regularity: The OGP Working Group met three times during the implementation period. OGP standards require that the forums meet at least once every quarter.	Yellow	Yellow
1c. Collaborative mandate development: This standard was assessed in the IRM Design Report.	Yellow	N/A
1d. Mandate public: During the development of the action plan, there was no written mandate regarding the procedures of selection and activities of the Working Group. During the implementation period, information on the Working Group's membership has been available on the OGP website since July 2019, when the relevant prime minister decision on Working Group composition was adopted. ²	Red	Yellow
2a. Multistakeholder: The forum includes both government and nongovernment representatives.	Green	Green
2b. Parity: The forum includes 15 government and seven nongovernment representatives.	Yellow	Yellow
2c. Transparent selection: Nongovernmental organizations are automatically involved in the OGP Working Group if their inclusion is called for based on the commitments in the action plan.	Red	Yellow
2d. High-level government representation: The chief of the staff of the prime minister is the coordinator of the Working Group. Other government representatives involved in the Working Group are mostly middle-level government officials.	Yellow	Yellow
3a. Openness: The Working Group accepts action plan implementation input from and promotes representation for civil society and other stakeholders outside the group. ³	Green	Green
3b. Remote participation: Opportunities for remote participation were not provided at Working Group meetings but were provided during other events organized in 2020.	Yellow	Yellow
3c. Minutes: Information about Working Group meetings and key OGP events is posted on the OGP Armenia website. ⁴ However, the website	Green	Yellow

currently lacks comprehensive information on the relevant decisions, activities, and results related to OGP commitment implementation.		
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Key:

Green= Meets standard

Yellow= In progress (steps have been taken to meet this standard, but standard is not met)

Red= No evidence of action

Action Plan Implementation	
4a. Process transparency: The national OGP website posted regular updates on the OGP processes in 2019, but there is limited information on the progress of commitments, including reasons for delays and next steps. The OGP Armenia Facebook page has been more active in posting news and updates about OGP processes and outputs. ⁵	Yellow
4b. Communication channels: The national OGP website has a feature allowing the public to comment on news. The website does not provide a place to comment on action plan progress, but citizens can do so through the Facebook page.	Yellow
4c. Engagement with civil society: The government held occasional meetings with civil society and other interested stakeholders on specific commitments and their implementation.	Yellow
4d. Cooperation with the IRM: The government has shared the link to the IRM Design Report with other government institutions and stakeholders by posting the news on the OGP website. ⁶ It also emailed the link to Working Group members.	Green
4e. MSF engagement: The multistakeholder forum, the OGP Working Group, monitors implementation of the action plan and deliberates on how to improve it.	Green
4f. MSF engagement with self-assessment report: The government has not submitted an end-of-term self-assessment report yet.	N/A
4g. Repository: The government has not yet published a repository on the domestic OGP website, in line with IRM guidance. ⁷ The terms of reference have been developed for a new government-owned OGP website, and setup of the website is currently in process. The current OGP Armenia website is run by the nongovernmental organization Freedom of Information Center of Armenia. ⁸ The site provides basic information about OGP, OGP action plans, news, and updates. However, it does not provide evidence on and documentation of commitment implementation, in line with IRM guidance.	Yellow

¹ “Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, Decision N983-A on Appointing Coordinator and Creation of Working Group,” dated 19 July 2019, Electronic Government of the Republic of Armenia, <https://www.e-gov.am/decrees/item/20661/>.

² “Working Group,” Open Government Partnership Armenia, <http://ogp.am/en/working-group/>.

³ “Call for Suggestions on Changes in the Fourth OGP Action Plan, 20 August 2019,” Open Government Partnership Armenia, 20 August 2019, http://ogp.am/hy/news/item/2019/08/20/AP_4/; and “Invitation to Present Suggestions,” Open Government Partnership Armenia, 19 September 2019, http://ogp.am/hy/news/item/2019/09/19/4th_public/.

⁴ “OGP Stakeholders Meeting Was Held,” Open Government Partnership Armenia, 1 April 2019, <http://ogp.am/en/news/item/2019/04/01/NGOs/>; “Open Government Partnership Initiative Working Group Holds Meeting,” Open Government Partnership Armenia, 24 July 2019, http://ogp.am/en/news/item/2019/07/24/OGP_WG_July/; and Eduard Aghajanyan: “RA Government Highlights Effective Cooperation with Civil Society,” Open Government Partnership Armenia, 30 October 2019, http://ogp.am/en/news/item/2019/10/30/WG_meeting/.

⁵ “Open Government Partnership Armenia,” Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/OpenGovernmentPartnershipArmenia>.

⁶ “Armenia Design Report 2018–2020—For Public Comment”, Open Government Partnership Armenia, 9 September 2019, http://ogp.am/en/news/item/2019/09/09/IRM_4th/.

⁷ Open Government Partnership, *IRM Guidance for Online Repositories*, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/IRM_Guidance-for-Repositories_Updated_2020.pdf.

⁸ Open Government Partnership Armenia homepage, <http://ogp.am/en/>.

IV. Methodology and Sources

Research for the IRM reports is carried out by national researchers. All IRM reports undergo a process of quality control led by IRM staff to ensure that the highest standards of research and due diligence have been applied.

The International Experts Panel (IEP) of the IRM oversees the quality control of each report. The IEP is composed of experts in transparency, participation, accountability, and social science research methods.

Current membership of the International Experts Panel is

- César Cruz-Rubio
- Mary Francoli
- Brendan Halloran
- Jeff Lovitt
- Juanita Olaya

This review process, including the procedure for incorporating comments received, is outlined in greater detail in Section III of the Procedures Manual¹ and in Armenia’s Design Report (2018–2020).

About the IRM

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



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¹ “IRM Procedures Manual,” Open Government Partnership, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/irm-procedures-manual>.

Annex I. IRM Indicators

The indicators and method used in the IRM research can be found in the IRM Procedures Manual.¹ A summary of key indicators the IRM assesses is below:

- **Verifiability:**
 - Not specific enough to verify: As written in the commitment, do the objectives stated and actions proposed lack sufficient clarity and specificity for their completion to be objectively verified through a subsequent assessment process?
 - Specific enough to verify: As written in the commitment, are the objectives stated and actions proposed sufficiently clear and specific to allow for their completion to be objectively verified through a subsequent assessment process?
- **Relevance:** This variable evaluates the commitment’s relevance to OGP values. Based on a close reading of the commitment text as stated in the action plan, the guiding questions to determine the relevance are:
 - Access to Information: Will the government disclose more information or improve the quality of the information disclosed to the public?
 - Civic Participation: Will the government create or improve opportunities or capabilities for the public to inform or influence decisions or policies?
 - Public Accountability: Will the government create or improve public facing opportunities to hold officials answerable for their actions?
- **Potential impact:** This variable assesses the *potential impact* of the commitment, if completed as written. The IRM researcher uses the text from the action plan to:
 - Identify the social, economic, political, or environmental problem;
 - Establish the status quo at the outset of the action plan; and
 - Assess the degree to which the commitment, if implemented, would impact performance and tackle the problem.
- **Completion:** This variable assesses the commitment’s implementation and progress. This variable is assessed at the end of the action plan cycle, in the *IRM Implementation Report*.
- **Did It Open Government?:** This variable attempts to move beyond measuring outputs and deliverables to looking at how the government practice, in areas relevant to OGP values, has changed as a result of the commitment’s implementation. This variable is assessed at the end of the action plan cycle, in the IRM Implementation Report.

Results oriented commitments?

A potentially starred commitment has more potential to be ambitious and to be implemented. A good commitment design is one that clearly describes the:

1. **Problem:** What is the economic, social, political, or environmental problem? Rather than describing an administrative issue or tool (e.g., ‘Misallocation of welfare funds’ is more helpful than ‘lacking a website.’).
2. **Status quo:** What is the status quo of the policy issue at the beginning of an action plan (e.g., “26 percent of judicial corruption complaints are not processed currently.”)?
3. **Change:** Rather than stating intermediary outputs, what is the targeted behavior change that is expected from the commitment’s implementation (e.g., “Doubling response rates to information requests” is a stronger goal than “publishing a protocol for response.”)?

Starred commitments

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/entities. To receive a star, a commitment must meet several criteria:

- The commitment’s design should be **Verifiable, Relevant** to OGP values, and have **Transformative** potential impact. As assessed in the Design Report.

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- The commitment's implementation must be assessed by IRM Implementation Report as **Substantial** or **Complete**.

This variable is assessed at the end of the action plan cycle, in the IRM Implementation Report.

¹ "IRM Procedures Manual," Open Government Partnership, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/irm-procedures-manual>.