Estonian Open Government Partnership Action Plan for 2022–2024

Contents

Introduction

The Open Government Partnership (hereinafter 'OGP') is an international initiative to increase the openness, transparency, and people-centredness in the exercising of public authority, using new technologies for this purpose. Estonia joined the initiative in 2012. From 1 October 2022, Estonia will be the lead co-chair of the OGP for one year. The goals of Estonia as a co-chair are detailed in the next chapter. The OGP activities are implemented through two-year action plans, with the 'Estonian Open Government Partnership Action Plan for 2022–2024' (hereinafter 'Action Plan') being the sixth. The activities of Estonia's OGP are coordinated by the Open Government Committee on Development (hereinafter 'ARVAK'), which includes representatives from ministries as well as non-governmental organisations. The Action Plan supports the achievement of the strategic goals of the long-term development strategy of the country 'Estonia 2035'. More directly, the Action Plan is related to the goal 'Estonia is an innovative, reliable, and people-centred country':

- 'Estonia is an innovative country that values the creation and use of knowledge, where social life is organised with the help of new, people-centred, and efficient technologies. The legal and tax environment and the organisation of governance foster social cohesion, the adoption of new solutions, innovation, and flexible public administration. Public services function in the background and are predictable, and the data space is protected. Organisation of the Estonian State and the participation of people therein is both trend-setting and exemplary for other countries;

- Estonia is a reliable country for its citizens and a valued partner in international relations. The governance of the state is open, i.e. power is exercised in the public interest, both honestly and transparently. Estonia is guarded and defended, we are well-known in the world and the international position of the country is strong;

- As a country, Estonia is people-centred, where policy-making is co-creative and people can participate in making important decisions. Public services are of high quality and accessible to people, regardless of where they live, and increase their well-being and security.'

The Action Plan also supports the 'Estonia 2035' goals 'Smart, active, and healthy people living in Estonia' ('Active people can handle their life well and are socially active and responsible, contributing to the development of themselves, their family and the community, as well as the state, throughout their life.') and 'Estonian society is caring, cooperative, and open' ('A cooperative society is network-based and active. Each and every person, community, and non-governmental organisation can and wants to get involved in the organisation of society and work together'). Achieving these goals is also supported by several strategic development documents and sectoral action plans.[1] The OGP Action Plan focuses on activities that are carried out in co-operation between governmental authorities and non-governmental organisations. The activities have been selected on the basis of proposals[2]

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[1] For example, the subobjective of the development plan 'Estonia's Digital Agenda 2030': 'to ensure the best digital government experience by 2030'; the subobjective of the 'Estonian Research and Development, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship Strategy 2021–2035': 'Estonia's development relies on research-based and innovative solutions'; and the subobjective of the 'Cohesive Estonia Strategy 2030': 'Estonia is a people-centred country that promotes the development of communities and civil society where people are valued and engaged, share democratic values, and improve their living environment through active participation in community and social activities'. See also 'Anti-Corruption Action Plan 2021–2025'.

[2] The public gathering of ideas took place from 21 February to 17 April 2022, and 18 proposals were submitted by the NGO Estonian Social Innovation Lab, Tallinn University, Transparency International Estonia, the learning environment Noorte Vabamu, the Estonian Cooperation Assembly, the Green Tiger Foundation, the Estonian Education Forum, the Estonian Association of Sociologists, the Estonian Fund for Nature, the DD Foundation, the Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organisations

submitted to the public idea gathering and the initiatives of ministries. The Government Office coordinates the preparation and implementation of the Action Plan.

Estonia as co-chair of the Open Government Partnership

In the previous Estonian Open Government Partnership Action Plan for the years 2020–2022, the goal was to contribute more to the management of the OGP to present Estonia internationally as an example of open government and to share its experiences, among other things, in co-creative policy-making and in the field of digital infrastructure.

The strategic management body of the OGP is the steering committee, to which representatives of 11 countries and 11 non-governmental organisations are elected. Estonia was elected by other member states to the steering committee last year, and our mandate will last from 1 October 2021 to October 2023. It was the first time Estonia applied.

Each year, the members of the steering committee choose one country from among themselves, who will take on the role of supporting co-chair in the first year and the role of lead co-chair in the second year. The plan of Estonia was to apply for co-chair when applying for the steering committee, which was successful. Our mandate as a co-chair began on 1 January 2022 and will last for two years. In the first year, Estonia is the supporting co-chair (the lead co-chair is Italy), and in the second year, Estonia is the lead co-chair. As the lead co-chair, Estonia has the right to organise the OGP summit in 2023. Usually, more than 80 state ministers and other high-level representatives and a total of more than 2,600 people (including public servants and representatives of the civil society) participate in the summit.

In addition to the two countries, NGOs elect two co-chairs from among themselves. The lead co-chair of non-governmental organisations and the main partner of Estonia is Anabel Cruz (Uruguay). Estonia will take over the lead co-chair role from Italy in October 2022. By that time, in cooperation with Anabel Cruz, we will prepare the Co-Chair Agenda, which is an important part of the strategic management of the OGP.

As the co-chair of the OGP, Estonia focuses on co-creation from two perspectives: introducing and further developing the principles and solutions of co-creative policy-making in cooperation with member states and the civil society, and more active use of co-creation in the processes of the OGP as an organisation. Many good solutions have been developed around the world within the framework of the OGP, the sharing of which could be better. We want to find, in cooperation with the member states, ways to make better use of the so-called peer-to-peer experience sharing between countries as well as between countries and non-governmental organisations. The sharing of experiences is all the more important because the world has faced a number of crises in recent years, the solving of which has sometimes meant that the principles of open government have been temporarily set aside.

The OGP is also a good platform for pointing out the role of the civil society in crisis management internationally. Non-governmental organisations in Estonia and other countries have played a significant role in helping Ukraine both in strengthening its defence capabilities and in supporting war refugees. Within the framework of the OGP, we can both recognise the heroes and share experiences internationally and prepare for the reconstruction of Ukraine after the war.

(OGP roundtable), Liia Hänni, Kristina Reinsalu, Ave Habakuk, Teele Pehk, and Maiu Lauring. All submitted ideas with feedback gathered by the Government Office have been published on the website of the Government Office.

As the OGP has initiated the process of updating its development strategy, which is led by the co-chairs, Estonia has a great opportunity to analyse the major challenges of the next decade of internationally open government and set strategic goals for the OGP as an organisation.

Activities to date in the OGP

The five Open Government Partnership action plans of Estonia to date have included 59 activities in total. The focus is on transparent and inclusive policy-making and the digital infrastructure that supports it.

Internationally, the Citizen Initiative Portal has received a lot of attention, through which everyone can raise a social problem or issue, hold a public debate on it, or initiate the preparation of a collective address to the Riigikogu. The website minuomavalitsus.fin.ee for assessing the service levels of local governments has been completed, where one can view local government data by area and compare such data with the Estonian average and that of other local governments. Estonia is also leading by example with its draft information system, in which the possibilities to inform interested parties about the progress of the draft procedure have been increased as part of the OGP action plans, and development is underway, as a result of which the information system will become a draft co-creation workspace.

In order to increase transparency and understanding about the use of public funds, government accounting data concerning the application of public money has been published[3] and an online overview of payments made to non-governmental organisations by central government agencies has been created.[4] The data portal opendata.riik.ee has also been set up, and data related to the plenary sittings of the Riigikogu has been made available as open data.[5]

Several initiatives with the aim of improving the policy-making skills of state and local government officials have been implemented and will continue in the future. Within ministries, engagement coordinators provide the necessary support to the officials and central training events are organised for officials from both state and local governments. Guidelines and examples have been developed for local governments on how to prepare an easy-to-understand overview of the budget. They have also been guided in the implementation of an inclusive budget and in the preparation of an action plan for open government of their unit.

At the same time, the concept of a strategic partnership was developed to increase the transparency of non-governmental organisation funding. In order for the civil society to be able to better analyse public policy and involve its member organisations in the development of positions, a non-governmental development programme has been implemented.

All of the OGP action plans of Estonia thus far, their reports, and assessments by the Independent Reporting Mechanism (hereinafter 'IRM') are available on the website of the Government Office.[6]

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[3] https://riigiraha.fin.ee
[4] mtyraha.heakodanik.ee
[5] The open data of the Riigikogu is issued via the applications programming interface (API) in JSON format: https://api.riigikogu.ee/swagger-ui.html.
[6] https://www.riigikantselei.ee/valitsuse-too-planeerimine-ja-korraldamine/valitsuse-too-toetamine/avatud-valitsemise-partnerlus

Process for preparing the Action Plan

The ARVAK confirmed the process on 15 December 2021. Due to unforeseen events at both the international and national level, the Action Plan was completed later than originally planned, but still in compliance with the time frame prescribed by the Open Government Partnership Action Plan preparation standards.

Table 1. Process for preparing the Action Plan

Time	Activity	Goal
7 December 2021	ARVAK meeting	To agree on a process for preparing the Action Plan
9 February 2022	OGP roundtable meeting	To discuss the process for preparing the Action Plan and analyse the results of previous action plans
15 February 2022	ARVAK meeting	To provide an assessment concerning the implementation of the current Action Plan and the need to continue its activities. To agree on the duration and priorities of the Action Plan.
21 February – 17 April 2022	Public gathering of ideas (including ministries)	To find new OGP activities
22 February 2022	Inspiration day 'Local government: opportunities for local participation'	The conference, organised in cooperation with the Ragnar Nurkse Department of Innovation and Governance at TalTech and the Estonian Cooperation Assembly, includes, among other things, a workshop to discuss the possible activities of the OGP with representatives of local governments
30 March 2022	Meeting of deputy secretary generals	To introduce the process for preparing the OGP Action Plan and contribution opportunities
3 May 2022	Discussion seminar with participants in the idea gathering (non-governmental organisations and ministries)	To specify and further develop the proposals submitted to the idea gathering in the co-creation of the submitters of the related ideas and the ministries of the field
	ARVAK meeting	To introduce the proposals submitted to the idea gathering and summarise the discussion seminar
April–May	Meetings with ministries	To agree on which activities will contribute to the OGP Action Plan
June–July	Writing the first version of the Action Plan and informal coordination with ministries and main partner organisations	The discussions and agreements so far have been analysed and the draft Action Plan has been completed
8 July 2022	Sending feedback from the idea gathering to the submitters of the ideas	To justify which ideas will be used and why
August	Coordination of the Action Plan	An agreement has been reached with ARVAK members, partners, and ministries concerning the Action Plan
	Submission of the OGP Action Plan to the Government of the Republic	Approval of the Action Plan

Future Action Plan

Pursuant to the OGP guidelines, the activities must be specific, with a measurable result, agreed upon with the responsible person and the co-responsible person(s), relevant, and capable of being performed at the planned time.

The Action Plan provides two commitments, for the performance of which five complementary activities are planned. The development of the draft co-creation workspace is a follow-up activity.

Table 2. Commitments and activities of the Action Plan

Activity	Brief description of the activity
Commitment 1: increasing co-creation in policy-making	
1.1 Developing a co-creation workspace	The state co-creation project creates a comprehensive workspace that covers the entire life cycle of the draft, enabling the co-creation of drafts and the management of amendments on the same platform. The system helps to involve the public, as well as increases the transparency and improves overview of the legislative drafting of the country.
1.2 Expert group on open government and supplementing the toolbox of co-creation methods	Create an open government roadmap that systematically maps the necessary steps to implement co-creative policy-making in the public sector, to implement open government principles at all levels, and assess the potential impact of these developments.
1.3 Piloting the *Arvamusrännak* discussion methodology by involving the active target group	Organise a series of discussions (*arvamusrännak*) among the adult population to collect proposals and input from people for updating the action plan of the 'Estonia 2035' strategy in the spring of 2023. After the discussions, the methodology is described with lessons learned so that it can be used by other interested parties in Estonia and elsewhere.
Commitment 2: ensuring that policy-making is more based on knowledge	
2.1 Developing the piloting framework and implementing the first pilot projects	Make piloting a natural part of policy-making by creating a comprehensive piloting framework (including the legal system, support measures, guidance materials, etc.).
2.2 Supporting data-driven decision-making in policy-making	Create a technological solution that supports data-based decision-making integrated into decision-making processes, so that the use of data in policy-making is transparent, simple, and fast.

Commitment 1: increasing co-creation in policy-making

Number and name of the commitment	1.1 Developing a co-creation workspace		
Brief description of the commitment	The state co-creation project creates a comprehensive workspace that covers the entire life cycle of the draft, enabling the co-creation of drafts and the management of amendments on the same platform. The system helps to involve the public, as well as increases the transparency and improves overview of the legislative drafting of the country.		
Commitment lead	Government Office and Ministry of Justice		
Supporting stakeholders	**Government**	**Civil society**	**Other actors (parliament, private sector, etc.)**
		Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organisations, Estonian Cooperation Assembly, e-Governance Academy, Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Transparency International Estonia	
Period covered	August 2022 – June 2024		

Problem definition
What problem does the commitment aim to address? Law is the most important policy-making tool that affects all people, and the way laws are made determines both the content of future legislation and how it will be adhered to. In a democratic state governed by the rule of law, legislation must be open, transparent, and free of bureaucracy. The existing technical solutions for legislative drafting do not provide the necessary clarity. Each draft has several versions during the procedure, which are formatted in separate Word documents. Incoming feedback and responses thereto are also presented in separate documents, which makes it extremely difficult to track changes and their causes. This means that it is difficult for the general public to gain insight because the information is fragmented in different places. In addition, the existing solutions do not promote the involvement of civil society in legislative drafting. Information about the topic often reaches stakeholders only when the first version of the draft is already completed. Cooperation between the parties during the procedure is also lacking. The legislative drafting information systems currently in use are technologically outdated. In addition, they do not create opportunities for cooperation or favour the use of modern co-creation opportunities in the legislative drafting process.
What are the causes of the problem? More specifically, the problems that will be solved by the project are the following: • **Lack of transparency** – different stages of the procedure are not connected to each other in a sufficiently

traceable way.

- **Inadequate solutions enabling cooperation** – the solutions promoting cooperation are incomplete. There is no possibility to manage activities on the basis of a group or individually. The related parties communicate with each other by sending document files and presenting the amendments in the form of a table. The proposals, recommendations, and consents of the parties are in a separate text that is not related to the provision to be amended.
- **Problems with the quality of legislative drafting** – there is no up-to-date overview of which agencies deal with which topics; as a result, it is difficult to get involved and express an opinion at an earlier stage. The impact analysis is not linked between stages and is not sufficiently tangible.
- **Lack of a technological solution supporting legislative drafting** – the technological base (draft legislation information system EIS, EMS, Word, Excel, emails) and the information contained therein are fragmented, with different structure and logic; the existing technological solutions are outdated.
- **Problems of usability, user-friendliness, and ease of use of existing solutions** – in the usability analysis of the participatory website and the draft legislation information systems EIS, the user-friendliness of the EIS has been evaluated with, among others, the following comments: 'terrible', 'this tool is not suitable for the ministry in its current form', 'the search engine is poor', 'too much of a burden', 'technical problems still unresolved', etc.

The description of the problems has been prepared, among other things, with the help of the mapping of the legislative drafting procedure in 2012, the extensive involvement of the Innotiim, and the feedback received from the test groups of the prototype of the co-creation workspace. In addition, the PRAXIS analysis on the usability of the EIS and the reports of the Minister of Justice in the Riigikogu on the quality of legislative drafting have been used as additional sources.

Commitment description

What has been done so far to solve the problem?
A prototype was created for the project in 2019. It has been introduced to approximately 300 future users both in focused and documented test groups (9 test groups of the entire project + 5 test groups of the EU case procedure) and at introductory events. There has been great support and interest from potential users. In 2020, the development of the MVP began, which can be considered the first phase of the project. In the second half of 2021 and the first half of 2022, piloting of the first phase started and the solutions continued to be improved. Wider piloting of the first phase is planned for the first half of 2022. In parallel with the development process, the needs to change the legislative drafting procedure are analysed with the aim of making them more suitable for data exchange instead of file exchange. In the beginning of 2022, the next stages of development of the co-creation workspace were launched, including both internal and public cooperation, the processing of EU cases, and the public view. SF funding for the project will last until August 2023.

What solution are you proposing?
The proposed solution enables the following for the legislative drafting workspace to be created as a complete solution:

- it is possible to participate in a public consultation and express opinions through the public user interface;
- a selectable event for meetings with lobbyists and stakeholders has been created with the necessary data fields, which can be exported from the workspace by topic.

What results do we want to achieve by implementing this commitment?
As a result of the development, a modern user interface for consultation with the public will be prepared, which will reduce the administrative burden of both stakeholders and drafters, will be more user-friendly, and create better conditions for the involvement of the parties. Covering meetings with lobbyists and stakeholders during the drafting

process increases the transparency of legislative drafting.	

Commitment analysis	
How will the commitment promote transparency?	The changes would have a positive impact on civil society, enabling a better overview of the proposed legislative drafting and creating ways to get involved with less time, including presenting opinions on a specific provision. The number of manual steps in the legislative drafting process is reduced. The materials do not have to be moved from one system to another during the procedure as the entire procedure related to the matter takes place in one workspace, providing an overview of the schedule, related materials, involved persons, and amendments made over time.
How will the commitment help foster accountability?	Prerequisites are created for improving the quality of legislative drafting. Involvement, including communication with lobbyists and stakeholders, is organised in a transparent and traceable manner.
How will the commitment improve citizen participation in defining, implementing, and monitoring solutions?	Anyone who is interested in what is happening in society and wants to be informed about it or have a say can participate in legislative drafting through the public user interface. The changes would have a positive impact on civil society, enabling a better overview of the proposed legislative drafting and creating ways to get involved with less time, including presenting opinions on a specific provision.

Even those who currently have less opportunities and knowledge can have a say in legislative drafting. Namely, pursuant to the procedure already in force today, senior officials disclose meetings with lobbyists, but meetings concerning draft legislation are excluded from this regulation. Disclosing the meetings regarding draft legislation as well provides better access to the legislative drafting process for various stakeholders. |

Commitment planning					
Milestones	**Expected outputs**	**Expected completion date**	**Stakeholders**		
It is possible to pilot participation in a public consultation and expressing an opinion	1. It is possible to pilot the possibility for the parties to participate or be involved at an earlier stage of the procedure and to organise the involvement more efficiently: manual activities are replaced by	August 2023	Lead: Government Office, Ministry of Justice		
			Supporting stakeholders		
			Government	CSOs	Others (e.g. parliament, private sector,

	automated ones; the information is in one workspace and is not moved around manually. 2. A common procedural workspace that enables better ways of cooperation. 3. A convenient functionality for expressing opinions and discussing comments in a public cooperation workspace has been created, which can be piloted.	12			etc.)
				Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organisations, Estonian Cooperation Assembly, e-Governance Academy, Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Transparency International Estonia	
A selectable event for a meeting with lobbyists has been created with the necessary data fields, which can be exported from the workspace by topic	1. All meetings with lobbyists and stakeholders that take place within the framework of one draft legislation are visible in the procedure of the same draft legislation 2. The following information is available regarding meetings organised to discuss draft legislation with lobbyists and stakeholders: participants, time, and topic. 3. Information on meetings with lobbyists and stakeholders can be exported from the co-creation workspace.	June 2024	Lead: Government Office, Ministry of Justice

Continued table (stakeholder section for June 2024 row):

Government	CSOs	Others (e.g. parliament, private sector, etc.)
	Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organisations, Estonian Cooperation Assembly, e-Governance Academy, Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Transparency International Estonia	

Supporting stakeholders

Number and name of the commitment	1.2 Expert group on open government and supplementing the toolbox of co-creation methods		
Brief description of the commitment	Create an open government roadmap that systematically maps the necessary steps to implement co-creative policy-making in the public sector, to implement open government principles at all levels, and assess the potential impact of these developments		
Commitment lead	Government Office		
Supporting stakeholders	**Government**	**Civil society**	**Other actors (parliament, private sector, etc.)**
	Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Finance	Association of Estonian Cities and Municipalities, Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organisations, Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Estonian Employers' Confederation, Estonian Trade Union Confederation, Estonian Council of Environmental NGOs, Estonian National Youth Council, NGO Estonian Village Movement Kodukant, Estonian Chamber of Disabled People, Estonian Social Innovation Lab, e-Governance Academy, Transparency International Estonia	
Period covered	August 2022 – June 2024		

Problem definition

What problem does the commitment aim to address?

The long-term national development strategy 'Estonia 2035' approved by the Riigikogu states the goal 'As a country, Estonia is people-centred, where policy-making is co-creative and people can participate in making important decisions'. In order to achieve this goal, the Estonian public sector must improve both the skills and attitudes of officials in the coming years so that they correspond to the principles of open government. The same goal is supported by the plan to create the national co-creation workspace KOOS, which will create the foundations for enabling secure digital co-creation with personal identification in a flexible and open workspace.

What are the causes of the problem?

So far, the main focus has been on the development of the technical platform, and less attention has been directed to the transition to co-creative policy-making. As with any change, legal conditions, public sector skills, and budgetary constraints must be taken into account. While KOOS will create a digital space that enables co-creation, the skills and attitudes that favour co-creation still need to be developed. It is not limited to the ability to organise public policy-making seminars, but includes a much broader set of competencies that allow, among other things, to create a safe atmosphere for discussion, find compromises, support parties in coming up with satisfactory solutions, and build consensus. Due to the developing environment of inclusion and co-creation, the regulatory framework concerning legal and policy-making standards also needs to be modernised. For example, the regulation of the Government of the Republic, the Good Practice of Engagement, and the methodology of impact assessment must be reviewed.

Commitment description

What has been done so far to solve the problem?

In order to promote co-creative policy-making, a number of activities have been implemented as part of the previous action plans of the Estonian Open Government Partnership, both in the development of skills and the supporting technical solutions. They are described in more detail in this Action Plan.

What solution are you proposing?
The solution consists of two measures.

I To put together an open government expert group, the purpose of which is to create an open government roadmap that systematically maps the necessary steps to implement co-creative policy-making in the public sector, implement open government principles at all levels, and assess the potential impact of these developments. The open government roadmap must describe:

- a roadmap for the implementation of co-creative policy-making in state agencies, taking into account the possibilities and needs of various stakeholders;
- a roadmap for promoting open government and co-creation in local governments;
- an overview of the needs of governmental authorities in the development of co-creative policy-making skills;
- an overview of the needs of local governments in the development of co-creative governance skills;
- proposals for updating the Good Practice of Engagement;
- proposals for legal changes promoting open government and co-creation.

II To supplement the toolbox of co-creation methods, which is one of the commitments of the 'Estonia's Open Government Partnership Action Plan for 2020–2022', based on the proposals submitted to the public idea gathering and the conclusions of the open government expert group.

What results do we want to achieve by implementing this commitment?
As a result of the work of the open government expert group, the current situation of co-creative policy-making in Estonia and the areas that need development have been systematically reviewed. The policy recommendations of the expert group help increase co-creation in policy-making. It also helps to prepare for the introduction of the co-creation workspace KOOS. At the same time, the toolbox of co-creation methods will be supplemented with specific methods and instructions, so that both central and local government officials have access to the existing experience on co-creative policy-making in Estonia in one place.

Commitment analysis	
How will the commitment promote transparency?	The understanding of the public sector of co-creation will be harmonised and the legal space and technological solutions supporting it will be modernised. All of these are prerequisites to increase the transparency of the policy-making process.
How will the commitment help foster accountability?	
How will the commitment improve citizen participation in defining, implementing, and monitoring solutions?	In addition to the aforementioned, KOOS, the open government expert group, and the toolbox of co-creation methods have been co-created.

Commitment planning					
Milestones	**Expected outputs**	**Expected completion date**	**Stakeholders**		
Open government expert group	The open government roadmap is completed	January 2023	Lead: Government Office		
			Supporting stakeholders		
			Government	CSOs	Others (e.g. parliament, private sector, etc.)
			Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Finance	See above	
Supplementing the toolbox of co-creation methods with, among other things, the methodologies submitted to the public gathering of ideas for the OGP Action Plan	Descriptions of at least four methodologies with examples have been added to the toolbox	December 2022	Lead: Government Office		
			Supporting stakeholders		
			Government	CSOs	Others (e.g. parliament, private sector, etc.)
			Ministry of	Estonian	

		16	Justice, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Finance	Cooperation Assembly, Estonian Social Innovation Lab, e-Governance Academy, Green Tiger, Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organisations	

Agreeing with the parties on the implementation of the proposals of the open government expert group	The implementation agreement is presented to the Open Government Committee on Development (ARVAK)	May 2023	Lead: Government Office		
			Supporting stakeholders		
			Government	CSOs	Others (e.g. parliament, private sector, etc.)
			Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Finance	Members of the expert group	

Implementing the proposals of the open government expert group	To the extent agreed in ARVAK	June 2024	Lead: Government Office		
			Supporting stakeholders		
			Government	CSOs	Others (e.g. parliament, private sector, etc.)
			Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Finance	Members of the expert group	

Number and name of the commitment	1.3 Piloting the *Arvamusrännak* discussion methodology by involving the active target group		
Brief description of the commitment	Organise a series of discussions (*arvamusrännak*) among the adult population in the autumn of 2022 to collect proposals and input from people for updating the action plan of the 'Estonia 2035' strategy in the spring of 2023. The goal is to hold at least 150 group discussions across Estonia. After the discussions, the methodology is described with lessons learned so that it can be used by other interested parties in Estonia and elsewhere.		
Commitment lead	Government Office		
Supporting stakeholders	**Government**	**Civil society**	**Other actors (parliament, private sector, etc.)**
	All ministries	Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organisations	
Period covered	August 2022 – June 2023		

What problem does the commitment aim to address?
Estonia has integrated the involvement of non-governmental organisations in the policy-making process quite well, but the current system primarily supports the involvement of people in non-governmental organisations. However, most people are not members of a representative or umbrella organisation, and therefore the policy-makers often do not hear a significant part of the opinions. Various polls and studies map the approach and expectations of the general public, but they do not support the emergence of in-depth and reasoned discussions, which is why new solutions are rarely found. The long-term national development strategy 'Estonia 2035' approved by the Riigikogu states the goal 'As a country, Estonia is people-centred, where policy-making is co-creative and people can participate in making important decisions'. In order to achieve this goal, it is stipulated, among other things, that the 'Estonia 2035' action plan of the Government of the Republic is updated every year in co-creation with the people of Estonia.

What are the causes of the problem?
In 2020, the Government Office conducted user interviews with people who usually do not participate in engagement events as part of the Innosprint organised by the public sector innovation team. The interviews revealed that there are several reasons for inactivity:

- people do not consider themselves politically active, although they keep an eye on what is happening in politics every day and often discuss these topics with family and friends;
- people do not feel that their contribution could change something, because the calls to express their opinion are usually general and it remains unclear whether there is a specific person who actually wants to and can implement the presented proposals.

Based on these conversations, a profile of an 'active of their own' person was created, whose involvement has not been targeted until now.

Commitment description

What has been done so far to solve the problem?
During the preparation of 'Estonia 2035', the Government Office, in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance, conducted the opinion poll 'What kind of Estonia do you want in 2035?' in the spring of 2019. Nearly 14,000 people participated and in the process, important value-based keywords were screened for formulating the long-term goals of Estonia. It was possible to participate in the opinion poll both via an e-questionnaire and to fill out a paper form in libraries. The questionnaires were available in Estonian, Russian, and English.

Although the number of participants in the opinion poll was significant in the Estonian context, it can be said that it was merely a consultation. Therefore, the Government Office set itself the goal of piloting a co-creation methodology every year during the renewal of the 'Estonia 2035' action plan, which could be used by others in the future. For example, in 2021, the Government Office organised discussions with the youth for the 'Estonia 2035' strategy, during which the ideas of students in grades 7–12 were studied on how to improve the living environment in Estonia. A playful website was created to explain the topic and guided discussions were conducted in more than twenty schools (both on site and as e-lessons). As a result, nearly 200 ideas were gathered from the school students, resulting in 15 specific proposals on the topic of transport, waste, and energy. The people of Estonia were asked to vote for their favourite idea through the news portal. The young people who submitted the proposals with the most votes also presented their ideas to the prime minister.

What solution are you proposing?
The Government Office will organise a series of discussions (*arvamusrännak*) among the adult population in the autumn of 2022 to collect proposals and input from people for updating the action plan of the 'Estonia 2035' strategy in the spring of 2023. The Government Office wants to hold small group discussions all over Estonia, which will be led by active citizens on a voluntary basis in a place of their own choosing, and as a result of which the participants in the discussions will submit proposals to the state. The target group is the so-called 'active on their own' people, and the process is designed in a way that supports personal contact. After the discussions, the methodology is described with lessons learned so that it can be used by other interested parties in Estonia and elsewhere.

What results do we want to achieve by implementing this commitment?
A tried and tested co-creation methodology has been created, which helps to involve the target group of those who are active on their own. Based on the lessons learned from the discussions, either new methods can be designed or existing policy-making processes can be supplemented to increase the degree of co-creation.

Commitment analysis	
How will the commitment promote transparency?	In the methodology of the discussions, it is taken into account that the participants would know at all times what has become of their proposal after it has been presented. The background materials necessary for the discussion are also created for the participants.
How will the commitment help foster accountability?	
How will the commitment improve citizen participation in defining, implementing, and monitoring solutions?	The aim of the 'Estonia 2035' discussions is to hold at least one hundred and fifty group discussions. That would be the largest inclusion initiative in Estonia so far. The lessons of the *Arvamusrännak* discussion will be integrated into the co-creation instructions (see previous commitments).

Commitment planning					
Milestones	**Expected outputs**	**Expected completion date**	**Stakeholders**		
Development of the *Arvamusrännak* discussions methodology	The methodology is ready for implementation	August 2022	Lead: Government Office		
			Supporting stakeholders		
			Government	CSOs	Others (e.g. parliament, private sector, etc.)
			All ministries	Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organisations	
Organisation of the *Arvamusrännak* discussions	There will be at least 150 discussions	December 2022	Lead: Government Office		
			Supporting stakeholders		
			Government	CSOs	Others (e.g. parliament, private sector, etc.)
			All ministries	Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organisations	
Updating the 'Estonia 2035' action plan	The proposals of the *Arvamusrännak* discussions have been considered when updating the action plan, and the choices have been justified to the submitters	May 2023	Lead: Government Office		
			Supporting stakeholders		
			Government	CSOs	Others (e.g. parliament, private sector, etc.)

		20	All ministries	Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organisations	
Analysing the lessons of the *Arvamusrännak* discussions and describing the methodology	The methodology of the *Arvamusrännak* discussions has been published	February 2023	Lead: Government Office		
			Supporting stakeholders		
			Government	CSOs	Others (e.g. parliament, private sector, etc.)
			All ministries	Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organisations	

Commitment 2: ensuring that policy-making is more based on knowledge

Number and name of the commitment	2.1 Developing the piloting framework and implementing the first pilot projects
Brief description of the commitment	Make piloting a natural part of policy-making by creating a comprehensive piloting framework (including the legal system, support measures, guidance materials, etc.).
Commitment lead	Government Office

Supporting stakeholders	**Government**	**Civil society**	**Other actors (parliament, private sector, etc.)**
	Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, Ministry of Finance, and other ministries based on thematic focuses		Universities

Period covered	August 2022 – December 2023

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Problem definition

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What problem does the commitment aim to address?
Countries around the world are looking for new solutions to major social challenges that have not been solved with existing means and tools (e.g. aging population, the climate crisis, etc.). As a result, various ideas and solution variants are increasingly piloted before their implementation. Piloting is a structured process of trying out new ideas on a limited scale, allowing for learning and refinement of ideas before wider implementation.

The main reasons why piloting is increasingly being used:

- the desire to try new bold ideas. Piloting makes it possible to test bold ideas on a small scale, which, for example, seem too risky for nationwide implementation in Estonia.
- Better policy-making. Well-designed pilot projects provide insight into what works and what does not, as well as what is the impact of existing interventions.
- Cost savings. Thanks to the lessons learned during the piloting, major and costly mistakes can be avoided during the full-scale implementation of the solution.
- Making real progress. Piloting is one way to move forward with topics that otherwise do not progress beyond endless discussions.
- Increase dialogue and trust through more inclusive and transparent policy-making. Collaboratively designing, implementing, and learning from the pilot projects makes decisions more transparent.
- More agile policy-making. Piloting means step-by-step policy-making that makes it possible to learn from

the process and immediately incorporate those lessons.	

What are the causes of the problem?
Innovative solutions are often not implemented because their full-scale implementation seems too resource-intensive based on the available information. In addition, rigid policy-making processes do not sufficiently support step-by-step and experience-based decision-making, thereby stifling innovation. In the Estonian public sector, the desire and willingness to pilot solutions has grown, but there is a lack of experience and knowledge. Piloting requires some transformation of the usual policy-making process and the ability to prepare and conduct the pilot project.

Commitment description

What has been done so far to solve the problem?
So far, piloting has not been very common in the Estonian public sector. Instead, it has mostly been used in individual projects or in small teams. For example, the public sector innovation team applies behavioural scientific approaches, including nudging, which have also been applied in individual projects by the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of the Interior, the Tax and Customs Board, and others. Accelerate Estonia pilots private sector solutions that help solve public sector concerns.

What solution are you proposing?
Piloting is a structured process of trying out new ideas and different possible solutions on a limited scale, allowing for learning and developing the solution before wider implementation. By enabling smarter choices to be made with limited resources, efforts are being made to find more flexible and open ways instead of rigid processes to solve increasingly complex public sector problems. Rather than implementing broad social reforms without knowing whether they work or not, piloting allows for learning as reforms are developed or implemented. Thus, piloting makes it possible to try bold ideas and balance the risks associated with their implementation by letting us know what expected and unexpected consequences the measures will bring.

What results do we want to achieve by implementing this commitment?
Make piloting a natural part of policy-making by creating a comprehensive piloting framework (including the legal system, support measures, guidance materials, etc.). Piloting needs a supportive institutional framework and a culture that favours risk-taking, in addition to support structures and the ability to implement pilot projects. The institutional framework must ensure that the state always pilots the solutions legally, ethically, transparently, and methodically, and support the agile implementation of pilot projects. Therefore, we need a legal framework that supports piloting, as well as agreed principles of ethics and legality and a body assessing the legality and ethicality of pilot projects. We also need to introduce piloting as part of the impact assessment process.

Commitment analysis

How will the commitment promote transparency?	Piloting creates new knowledge for both policy-makers and the people affected by a particular issue. The knowledge and data obtained as a result of the pilot project are generally public, and thus the transparency of policy decisions is improved.
How will the commitment help foster accountability?	
How will the commitment improve citizen	As the pilot projects are carried out with a limited target group,

participation in defining, implementing, and monitoring solutions?	within a predetermined period of time, and in cooperation with important parties, it also increases the co-creation of policy making.

Commitment planning			
Milestones	**Expected outputs**	**Expected completion date**	**Stakeholders**
Launching the support measure for pilot projects	The grant conditions have been published and the acceptance of applications is open	December 2022	Lead: Government Office
			Supporting stakeholders
			Government	CSOs	Others (e.g. parliament, private sector, etc.)
					Joint organisation of Enterprise Estonia and KredEx
Description of piloting as one possible part of impact analysis methods	Supplementing the supporting materials for impact assessment methodology	December 2022	Lead: Government Office
			Supporting stakeholders
			Government	CSOs	Others (e.g. parliament, private sector, etc.)
			Ministry of Justice		
Piloting instruction material with examples	The instructional material has been made public	January 2023	Lead: Government Office
			Supporting stakeholders
			Government	CSOs	Others (e.g. parliament, private sector, etc.)
			Ministry of Justice		
Analysis and proposals:	Memorandum for the cabinet meeting	January 2023	Lead: Government Office

1. How to assess the ethics, legality, and quality of public sector pilot projects and under what conditions is such an assessment necessary? 2. On the need for changes in the legislative drafting process and/or practices so that piloting can be done in an agile, legitimate, and ethical manner.		24	Supporting stakeholders		
			Government	CSOs	Others (e.g. parliament, private sector, etc.)
			Ministry of Justice		Estonian Research Council
The examples and lessons learned from Estonian pilot projects so far have been collected and published, including lessons learned from carrying out the piloting process on the example of seven projects in 2022	The instructional material has been updated	December 2023	Lead: Government Office		
			Supporting stakeholders		
			Government	CSOs	Others (e.g. parliament, private sector, etc.)
			Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications		Joint organisation of Enterprise Estonia and KredEx
Introduction of piloting on a larger scale into the trainings of (future) top managers and into the competency model and trainings of middle managers	The competency models have been updated	December 2023	Lead: Government Office		
			Supporting stakeholders		
			Government	CSOs	Others (e.g. parliament, private sector, etc.)
			Ministry of Finance		

Number and name of the commitment	2.2 Supporting data-driven decision-making in policy-making		
Brief description of the commitment	Create a technological solution that supports data-based decision-making integrated into decision-making processes, so that the use of data in policy-making is transparent, simple, and fast.		
Commitment lead	Government Office		
Supporting stakeholders	**Government**	**Civil society**	**Other actors (parliament, private sector, etc.)**
	All ministries Statistics Estonia, Estonian Data Protection Inspectorate	Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organisations, e-Governance Academy	Private sector IT experts, OECD, European Commission
Period covered	August 2022 – June 2024		

Problem definition

What problem does the commitment aim to address?

In policy-making, the use of all available information related to the issue is difficult and time-consuming in the preparation of decisions. Having to take into account a large amount of information is overwhelming for the decision-makers. In practice, only information which was known and available to the drafter, which they knew how to use, and which they considered important is presented as the background and justification of the decision proposal. Even if subjective factors have not significantly influenced the presented background and arguments, it is often not possible to make sure of this at the time of making a decision or even later. Therefore, it is possible that a decision is made in good faith and based on the information provided, which in reality does not take into account all important aspects. Sometimes, the decision is criticised even if all important aspects have been taken into account. The commitment focuses on increasing the data-basedness of the final stage of the decision-making process of the Government of the Republic. Approximately 1,500 decisions are made annually at government cabinet meetings and sessions. The preparation of draft decisions is time-consuming, but a significant part of the preparation may not be used in the decision-making process. Studying a highly detailed document requires an excessive amount of time from a member of the government while a document with a high level of generalisation does not allow for a sufficient perception of the problem. As different ministers are interested in details in different aspects, even in those that the author of the document may not consider important, the only possible solution is to dynamically change the information and the analysis underlying it.

What are the causes of the problem?

At the proposal of the Government Office, the Government Data-Driven Decision-Making Framework Implementation project was initiated in 2022. Its external consultant PwC conducted interviews with ministries, Statistics Estonia, the Estonian Data Protection Inspectorate, and data specialists in the first half of the year. Based on the interviews, the following reasons were identified as bottlenecks affecting the effectiveness, transparency, and speed of decision-making in policy-making:

- skills in identifying, collecting, processing, and analysing relevant data are rather poor;
- access to registers and databases is limited;

- data that is known and accessible is used;
- private sector data is difficult to use;
- data quality is variable and in some cases poor;
- it is difficult to combine different data sets for analysis purposes;
- getting an overview of the background of the topic (memorandums, studies, analyses) is difficult and time-consuming.

Based on the above-mentioned mapping, the problem description and scope of this commitment have been formulated. The final results of the analysis of Government Data-Driven Decision-Making Framework Implementation will be completed in February 2023, and then, it is planned to specify the next steps in cooperation with ministries and partners (if necessary, to adapt and/or expand the terms of reference). When planning and implementing this commitment, both the broader view of the data-based decision-making process and other main activities in the field are kept in mind throughout to ensure their interconnection (including technological solutions).

Commitment description

What has been done so far to solve the problem?
So far, the main focus has been on the more thoughtful organisation of data management and state databases. Attention has also been paid to increasing the competence of officials who prepare decision proposals. What has been done so far has the potential to solve the described problems only partially. For example, it does not allow handling unstructured data sets, systematic search and presentation of information from them, does not allow ensuring a significant increase in the speed of background information mapping, the integrity of the created background, etc. A situation where all the basic data is in order and all the people dealing with the subject are sufficiently competent is not likely. The continuation of what has been done so far and the planned commitment are therefore not in competition. Instead, they support and empower each other. Better organisation of basic data and increasing the competence of users allow for more effective use of potential technological opportunities for data-based decision-making. The creation of an output, the operation of which the officials themselves are interested in, in turn motivates them to solve issues related to data management in a more purposeful and sustainable manner.

What solution are you proposing?
As a solution, we plan to automate the preparation of draft decisions (especially memoranda submitted to the Government of the Republic, as well as others) in a way where related data and information are aggregated, pre-processed, and visualised in a way that is easier for people to understand. As a result, the first draft of the decision is prepared without significant user intervention. For example, the data underlying a memorandum is aggregated and the results of its visualised analysis are presented automatically. The user will review the document and, if necessary, correct and supplement it.
The proposed solution allows to speed up the decision-making process, reduce the unintentional or intentional subjectivity of the preparation of draft decisions, and increase the transparency of the decision-making process. For example, the automated solution enables government cabinet meetings and sessions to receive data-based answers to questions that arise on an ongoing basis. These questions may require separate preparation time and may therefore be postponed to the future. The ideal solution is complex and it is reasonable to develop it in stages. The mentioned problems can be significantly alleviated already in the first stages, i.e. with a solution for the automatic aggregation, systematisation, and visualisation of data.
This solution is a combination of the results of initiatives implemented today (data management, open data information gateway, development of language technology, etc.). The goal is not necessarily to create a new user environment, especially if the goals set in the road map completed in February are achieved by adding individual additional functions to some existing or in-development technological solutions (e.g. the data reuse environment of Statistics Estonia).

What results do we want to achieve by implementing this commitment?
Drafters of draft decisions have at their disposal a working tool that significantly reduces the time spent searching for information related to the preparation of draft legislation, supports the inclusion of all relevant data, makes it more transparent what information was used and what information was left unused, and creates decision alternatives that are based only on rational considerations. When developing the tool, it is taken into account that all technological platforms used in policy-making and proceedings (including the co-creation workspace, session information system, etc.) must be connected to each other as much as possible.

Commitment analysis	
How will the commitment promote transparency?	The information that has been scattered so far is aggregated automatically, which makes information that decision-makers, implementers, and other interested parties were not aware of or could not find available to them. The information is made easier for humans to perceive automatically, which allows meaningful reading of large data sets and data with more complex relationships. In addition, understanding information in this way is less affected by the level of human data processing skills. This approach also ensures a visible trace of the data used for the preparation of the decision, related options, etc., on the basis of which it is possible to assess whether all relevant information was taken into account during the decision-making or later.
How will the commitment help foster accountability?	The basic data related to the decision and the broader background of the draft decision as well as the decision proposal based on rational considerations are presented. The possibility that some relevant data will not be used only for subjective reasons (e.g. the decision-makers were not aware of their existence) is reduced. Possible contradictions between decisions and background data stand out more clearly and it is possible to take this into account more easily when making a decision.
How will the commitment improve citizen participation in defining, implementing, and monitoring solutions?	The basic data of the decision and the connection of the decision therewith becomes observable and understandable even if the person interested in the topic lacks the knowledge and skills to search for data and process it as information. This enables a data-based view of the problem and makes it easier to present alternative proposals based on rational arguments.

Commitment planning			
Milestones	**Expected outputs**	**Expected**	**Stakeholders**

		completion date			
Development of a solution supporting data-based decision-making	A description of the future version of the solution, a roadmap to get there, and a prototype	March 2023	Lead: Government Office		
			Supporting stakeholders		
			Government	CSOs	Others (e.g. parliament, private sector, etc.)
			All ministries, Statistics Estonia, Data Protection Inspectorate		OECD, European Commission
A seminar or other engagement format for supplementing the developed solution with non-governmental organisations	An enhanced version of the solution supporting data-driven decision-making	June 2023	Lead: Government Office		
			Supporting stakeholders		
			Government	CSOs	Others (e.g. parliament, private sector, etc.)
				Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organisations, e-Governance Academy	
Development of a solution based on the roadmap in accordance with the prescribed stages	Those stages of the solution based on the roadmap which are feasible with the available resources have been implemented	June 2024 (may continue in the next action plan)	Lead: Government Office		
			Supporting stakeholders		
			Government	CSOs	Others (e.g. parliament, private sector, etc.)
			All ministries	Network of	

		29		Estonian Nonprofit Organisations, e-Governance Academy	

Implementing the Action Plan

The Action Plan is being implemented through a partnership between the state and non-governmental organisations. The lead for each commitment coordinates cooperation with supporting stakeholders and partners based on the principles of open government (transparency, cooperation, accountability). The Government Office publishes an overview of the implementation of the Action Plan on its website[7] at least twice a year; on an ongoing basis, if possible, based on reviews of the implementation of those responsible for the commitments and feedback from the partners involved.

The implementation of the Action Plan is monitored and coordinated by ARVAK, which gathers up to four times a year. The activity of ARVAK is supported by an informal OGP roundtable, which includes representatives of non-governmental organisations and other interested parties.

At the end of the Action Plan, a report on the performance of the Action Plan will be prepared. The independent evaluation mechanism produces two reports on the Action Plan: a baseline report analysing the relevance and potential impact of the commitments, and a final report focusing on the effectiveness of the implementation of the commitments.

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[7] https://www.riigikantselei.ee/et/avatud-valitsemise-partnerlus