



LIETUVOS  
RESPUBLIKOS  
VYRIAUSYBĖS  
KANCELIARIJA

# 2024-2025 OPEN GOVERNMENT PLAN

Cooperation and partnership -  
a prerequisite for sustainable  
solutions in the public sector

APPROVED  
by the meeting of ministerial  
representatives  
12 September 2023



Open  
Government  
Partnership



# SUMMARY

The aim of the Open Government Plan | To open up public governance processes by addressing the most pressing openness-related challenges anticipated in the upcoming years. This strategic blueprint aligns with the core tenets of the international initiative ‘Open Government Partnership’, prioritizing transparency, accountability, and public engagement, all in pursuit of consistent participation of Lithuania in this community. The 2024-2025 Plan aims at enhancing the sustainability of public sector decisions through sustained collaboration with the citizens.

The most pressing challenges for the 2024-2025 period | [The Open Government Working Group](#) – a panel of experts in openness development, academia, representatives from public, private and NGO sectors – has voted on the three [most pressing challenges](#):

- Ineffective public consultation mechanism and lack of efficient technological solutions.
- Lack of data utilisation in public sector decision-making.
- Lack of dialogue and feedback between the public sector and society.

Planned actions | For 2024-2025, three actions have been projected to contribute to the sustainability of decisions and better quality of services:

	Action	Responsible bodies
I.	<b>Streamlining the legislative decision-making process at the institutional and government levels and establishing a common framework for legislative oversight</b>	The Ministry of Justice, and the Office of the Government
II.	<b>Building a customer-centric approach and customer-based dialogue practices in the public sector</b>	The Public Management Agency, the Office of the Government, and the Ministry of the Interior
III.	<b>Enabling and ensuring the development of the co-creation process</b>	The Office of the Government

Success prerequisites | The following prerequisites are necessary for the successful implementation of the Open Government Plan:

- All planned actions further enhance the capacity to utilize data in decision-making. All actions are data-driven, whether it be from public consultation results, statistics, or other sources.
- All planned actions are carried out in a collaborative and participatory manner, involving stakeholders – not only the groups directly affected (civil servants,

representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the population of the country) but also experts and promoters of good practices.

- The planned actions aim to bring about changes not only at the national but also at the local levels.

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# Introduction

Cooperation and partnership-based public governance not only enhances the transparency and accountability of the state and local authorities but also improves the quality of the services they deliver and the decisions they make. Over the next two years, the implementation of the actions under the 2024-2025 Open Government Plan (hereinafter ‘the Plan’) will aim to bring about targeted changes in this area.

Openness in public governance is an aspiration outlined in many of the country’s strategic documents. One of the objectives of **the 2021-2030 National Progress Plan** (hereinafter ‘the National Progress Plan’) is to improve public governance, enhance its efficiency and transparency.<sup>1</sup> To put this objective into practice, openness policies have also found way into sub-strategic documents, such as the **Public Governance Development Programme** adopted in 2022, and the progress measure ‘Enabling the development of openness in the public sector’ to implement it.<sup>2</sup> This measure can provide funding for the implementation of the planned actions selected in cooperation with civil society, academia, the private sector and implementing agencies. The aspiration for openness is also outlined in the Programme of the Eighteenth Government of the Republic of Lithuania (hereafter ‘the Government Programme’). It highlights key operating principles (open data, accountability, discussion- and knowledge-based decisions, cooperation, interest alignment, building reputation, and government’s open communication), which reflect in the previous (2021-2023) Open Government Plan and serve as a roadmap for continuing Open Government initiatives.

In the process of Plan development, **an Open Government Working Group** (*multi-stakeholder forum*) was convened, which agreed on the key openness challenges:

- **Ineffective public consultation mechanism and lack of efficient technological solutions** | Despite numerous positive changes and a growing awareness of the importance of public consultations, citizen engagement remains a rare practice in the public sector’s decision-making process. In terms of promoting public engagement, these processes lack consistency, creativity, and the effective utilization of outcomes. Certain government institutions engage with the public in a relatively formal manner, without making efforts to engage more people. Information is often presented in a bureaucratic and convoluted manner, with engagement efforts being infrequent and rarely well-planned.
- **Lack of data utilisation in public sector decision-making** | Data is still underutilized in public sector decision-making, leading to reactive problem-solving (addressing issues when they become evident) or, at worst, to subjective decision-making (based

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<sup>1</sup> Objective 5 of the 2021-2030 National Progress Plan (to improve public governance, enhance its efficiency and transparency).

<sup>2</sup> The progress measure is available at: <https://lrvk.lrvk.lt/lt/administracine-informacija/planavimo-dokumentai>.

on expert or political opinion). The absence of robust data analytics poses a substantial risk to the quality of decisions, leaving the public sector vulnerable in emergencies and hindering proactive problem prevention.

- **Lack of dialogue and feedback between the public sector and society** | Surveys indicate a prevailing lack of trust in public governance institutions, especially those responsible for decision-making. With dwindling trust, people rarely engage in public governance processes, undervalue service quality, and often doubt their own ability to influence decisions or make an impact in any way. On the other hand, public institutions lack the initiative and capabilities to engage society in decision-making, fostering a livelier, more sincere collaboration and feedback from the public.

Co-creation tools (creative workshops and meetings with stakeholders) have helped to identify key challenges, leading to the decision to implement three actions related to ensuring the quality of decision-making and dialogue with society. Planned actions:

- I. **Streamlining the legislative decision-making process at the institutional and Government levels and establishing a common framework for legislative oversight** | responsible bodies – the Ministry of Justice, and the Office of the Government
- II. **Building a customer-centric approach and customer-based dialogue practices in the public sector** | Responsible bodies – the Public Management Agency, the Office of the Government, and the Ministry of the Interior
- III. **Enabling and ensuring the development of the co-creation process** | Responsible body – the Office of the Government

The actions are designed to foster greater openness within the public sector, ultimately bridging the gap between government and citizens and promoting data-driven decision-making. The outcomes of the Plan will add to the success indicators outlined in both the Government Programme and the National Progress Plan:

- public trust in the Government (a deliverable for 2024: 35%);
- the corruption perception index (a deliverable for 2024: 70 points);
- the share of the population that trusts public institutions and bodies (an interim deliverable for 2025: 75 %);
- the share of the population engaged in local public affairs in the last 12 months (an interim deliverable for 2025: 40%).

# Openness development initiatives

So far, various initiatives have been implemented as part of the Open Government Plans, spanning diverse areas such as financial and procurement transparency, civil society development, and the enhancement of public sector service quality, among others. The following measures have been highly appreciated by the international community: the Open Finance Portal, LietuvosFinansai.lt, the Civil society (NGO) database, the National NGO Fund.

Lithuania pursues openness not only through Open Government Plans but also through other strategic documents and policies. [The National Progress Plan](#) and subsequently drafted [the 2021-2030 Public Governance Development Programme](#) [see the development of openness in the public sector as one of the priorities](#) aimed at improving the quality of decision-making and strengthening public trust in public institutions. The progress measure ‘Enabling the development of openness in the public sector’, drawn up in line with these documents, can serve as a basis for the allocation of funds for the implementation of changes in openness.

The Office of the Government – a coordinator of the Open Government activities - completed the Open Government Initiatives project in 2022. The project aims to promote the development of openness in the public sector and to build public sector capabilities in engaging society in decision-making. The Office of the Government carries out other related activities too, all in cooperation with ministries and agencies, establishing networks of good practices. One such network is dedicated to improving the quality of customer service, while another contributes to enhancing the quality of public consultations within ministries. Lithuania also participates in various international forums, including the Open Government Working Group of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the activities of the Open Government Partnership.

While there is no dedicated strategic document regulating the coordination of openness policies, over recent years, efforts have been made to find ways to better align organizations striving for openness and contribute to the development of openness within the public sector:

- **Ensuring the quality of public consultations** | In 2022, amendments to the Government’s Rules of Procedure were adopted to lay down [a more detailed procedure for public consultations in decision-making](#). These amendments specify the cases for engaging with the public, the objectives, the type of information and data typically collected during consultations. They also outline various consultation methods, including surveys, interviews, conferences, public hearings, group discussions, and more. The amendments also specify where information about the beginning and results of consultations should be published; and they provide updated requirements for submitting results to decision-makers.

- Fostering co-creation and public engagement** | In 2023, Lithuania's vision for the future 'Lithuania 2050' was completed. One of its strategic ambitions is **Citizen-led democracy: credible, open, and united for action**, and one of the principles is the principle of openness and inclusion. Following this principle, public consultations are not only possible but should also involve a 'continuous dialogue and the generation of new ideas' with the public. This signifies a shift in the state's perception of citizens: from a new public management model, where citizens are viewed as passive customers responding to government proposals, to a collaborative and co-ownership-based relationship for decision-making. This change opens up opportunities for new *CivicTech* and simply *civ* initiatives (including product usage) where citizens can not only express their opinions but also co-create solutions together. However, this transformation requires a significant cultural and attitudinal shift within government institutions to make power-sharing with citizens comfortable and to develop new quality capabilities for citizen engagement. Around 2 500 people were involved in the development of this document, various co-creation forms were tested, including discussions with citizens in various regions, and a **Citizens' Council** was set up based on the principle of deliberative democracy.
- Evaluating progress in openness development** | The Government is currently in the process of creating a methodology for evaluating progress in openness development. **The methodology for evaluating progress in openness maturity will become a part of the index of public governance indicators.** It is now being developed alongside other methodologies for various aspects of public governance. It is expected to focus on the three thematic areas: **transparency, accountability, and participation**, these indicators will gauge the quality of institutional engagement with the public, the accessibility of public information, and the scale of public consultations. This methodology is being developed under the commissioning of the Ministry of the Interior, and in close collaboration with the OECD. Additionally, the OECD is working on the Open, Participatory and Representative Government Index, which will serve the basis to gauge the level of openness governments have achieved.
- Open Government (hereinafter 'the Working Group')** | It is a **cooperation platform** for continuous activities, advice, and cross-sectoral efforts, aimed at promoting openness initiatives within the public sector and ensuring their coordinated implementation. The Working Group has brought together **representatives from public, private and NGO sectors, and experts in openness development.** The Working Group also deliberate on other matters related to the development of open public governance in Lithuania, assesses the progress of strategic documents related to openness development, provides proposals for implementing openness initiatives, for disseminating best practices, and applying innovations in the field of openness within the public sector. The composition of the Working Group was approved by **Order No. V-25 of the Chancellor of the Government of 6 February 2023.**



# Preparation of the Open Government Plan

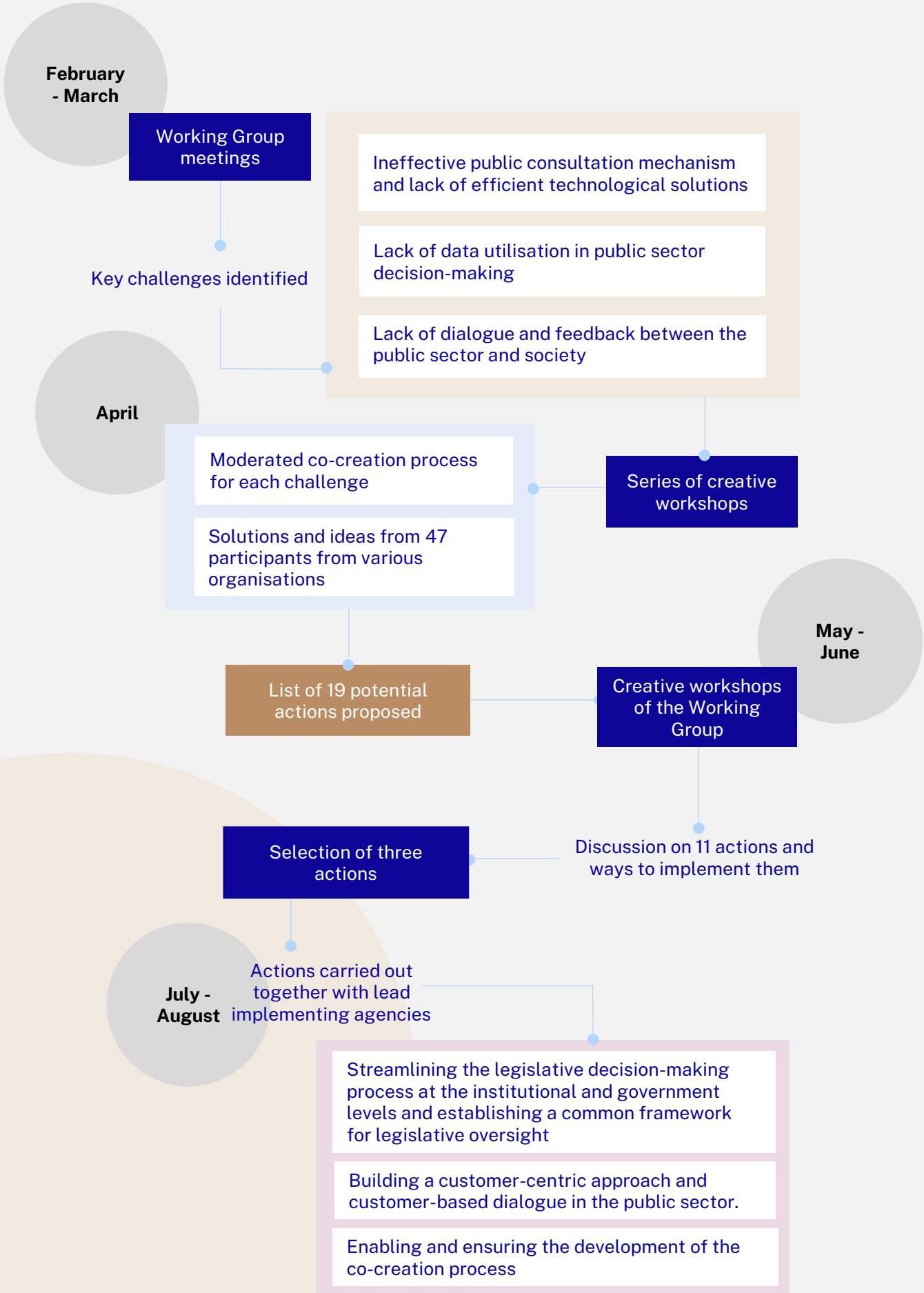
**Plan preparation principles** | The plan was formulated in line with one of the core principles of open governance – **involving all stakeholders in a shared dialogue** towards decisions. Efforts were made to hear the expectations of NGOs, businesses, government institutions, agencies, and citizens regarding the future actions and their implementation.

**The Working Group as a Multi-Stakeholder Forum** | This forum ensures responsible participation by Lithuania in the international initiative ‘**Open Government Partnership**’. The Multi-Stakeholder Forum plays a role in shaping national action plans under the ‘Open Government Partnership’ and also in overseeing and evaluating their progress.

**Duration and process of the preparation of the Plan** | The plan was initiated in **February 2023** and was submitted for approval to the Working Group in **August 2023**. In the meantime, stakeholders were invited to participate in public consultations and creative workshops. The Plan was finally approved at a meeting of ministerial representatives (vice-ministers, and chancellors) on **12 September 2023**. A detailed account of the preparation process is provided in this section.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For more information on the preparation process, please visit: <https://epilietis.lrv.lt/lt/atvira-vyriausybe-3/atviros-vyriausybes-partneryste/sestasis-veiksmu-planas>



## I. Approval by the Open Government Working Group of the concept for an Open Government Plan and areas of concern

The Working Group identified challenges in the following areas:

- open data (lack of open data, quality, usability),
- e-democracy (*CivicTech* solutions, digitization, data-driven decision-making, e-legislation),
- decision-making (capabilities of the public sector and society, democratic innovations, impact assessment),
- integrity (anti-corruption, political finances),
- other areas (*FinTech* supervision, NGO environment, healthcare).
- Government's priority is evidence-based and data-driven decision-making.

The Plan was proposed based on this foundation.<sup>4</sup>

In a voting process, the Working Group selected the three key challenges:

- Ineffective public consultation mechanism and lack of efficient technological solutions.
- Lack of data utilisation in public sector decision-making.
- Lack of dialogue and feedback between the public sector and society.

These challenges are detailed below.

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<sup>4</sup>The tree of openness-related challenges:  
[https://epilietis.lrv.lt/uploads/epilietis/documents/files/Problem%C5%B3%20medis\\_Atviros%20Vyriausyb%C4%97s%20planas.pdf](https://epilietis.lrv.lt/uploads/epilietis/documents/files/Problem%C5%B3%20medis_Atviros%20Vyriausyb%C4%97s%20planas.pdf)

It is evident that within the realm of citizen engagement, there is a deficiency in consistency, creativity, and the efficiency of the process. Furthermore, it is frequently observed that some governmental institutions engage with the public formally, failing to actively attract a broader audience to consultations or present content in a comprehensible and engaging manner. The involvement of the public is often poorly planned, resulting in a lack of clear guidelines and defined quality criteria. Challenges persist in effectively utilizing public participation outcomes when formulating and endorsing public governance decisions. Despite the potential for new technological solutions to rapidly, simply, and cost-effectively reach citizens and gather their input on pressing matters, Lithuania lacks a culture of public dialogue, which results in the underutilization of this opportunity.

Smaller areas of concern underlying the key challenges:

- Legislative quality (hasty and insufficiently considered formulation of laws, unclear rationale for decisions).
- The limited capabilities and motivation of public sector representatives to engage the public.
- Insufficient societal capabilities to actively engage.
- Inadequate emphasis on collaborative methods (e.g., deliberative democracy models, citizens' assemblies, etc.).
- Scarcity of technological solutions for involving people in decision-making.

Like many other nations, Lithuania is experiencing a decline in trust in the state, along with reduced confidence in key government institutions.<sup>5</sup> One of the reasons for this is insufficient and inconsistent engagement of citizens in political decision-making.

While the transparency and accessibility of information held by the public sector are increasing, some indicators however prevent one from concluding that Lithuania's public governance is very open, inclusive, and engaging public participation in governance processes. For instance, the Civic Participation Index<sup>6</sup> fluctuates between 22 and 28 points, indicating that Lithuanian society is still relatively passive in civic engagement, as it fails to utilise engagement opportunities, feels unable to influence decisions or get effective feedback. The Civic Power Index stands just at 35.9 points out of 100<sup>7</sup>. Accordingly, the indicator for citizen participation in public governance processes is still insufficient: 50% in 2019, i.e., only about half of the population are aware of their

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<sup>5</sup> Trust in local authorities stands at 29.6%, in the Government at 18.6%, and in the Seimas (Parliament) at 9.8%, according to a survey conducted by *Vilmorus LT* in February 2023.

<sup>6</sup> *Gallup Global Civic Engagement* survey, 2016 / 2018

<sup>7</sup> Civic Power Index Report, 2023

opportunities and ways to participate in public governance.<sup>8</sup> While there is an increasing understanding within public governance institutions about the importance of openness and public participation, the level of consultation maturity remains low. Out of 14 ministries, only 3 reached the second level of maturity in 2020 (none reached the first level), and in 2022, 2 ministries reached the first level, while 3 ministries reached the second level.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Citizen trust in state and municipal institutions and evaluation of service quality by MoI

<sup>9</sup> information is based on the outcomes of the annual evaluation of the ministerial consultation maturity conducted by the Office of the Government.

## Lack of data utilisation in public sector decision-making

Due to the lack of data and analytics, challenges in the public sector are addressed reactively (when the issue becomes sufficiently evident and pressing) and, in the worst-case scenario, subjectively (based on an opinion from an expert or politician). The lack of effective data analytics leaves the public sector vulnerable in emergencies, hindering proactive prevention of problems. Furthermore, the political cycle becomes dependent on interest groups.

It is crucial to ensure the accessibility of micro-data throughout the entire political intervention modelling cycle, including planning and impact assessment, and adjustments. Currently available statistical data do not provide precise guidance for interventions, their effects become visible only after a significant period, and there is no opportunity for prompt adjustments in implementation. This leads to gaps in timing, methodology, and other aspects within the policy cycle.

In recent years, there has been significant attention directed towards strengthening evidence-based governance. This involves the development of an integrated system for evaluating policy interventions and cost reviews within the strategic management system. Also, efforts are underway to establish a shared library of analytical evidence, aiming to ensure the accessibility and enhanced usability of conducted surveys for informed decision-making in governance. There is a push to enhance the utilization of science-based evidence for decision-making. Nevertheless, considering the lessons learned from managing the COVID-19 virus, practices from other countries, and the increasing volume of information and data, there is a discernible gap and an opportunity to complement and reinforce analytical tools through the use of data to generate evidence. The 2021 OECD report under the Technical Assistance Facility-funded project 'Mobilising Evidence at the Centre of Government in Lithuania. Strengthening Decision Making and Policy Evaluation for Long-term Development' emphasizes that access to accurate up-to-date data, together with the right technical tools and capacity to process it, is essential to produce reliable and informed analysis to shape policy advice.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Progress measure 'Enabling data-driven and experimental solutions' under 2021-2023 Public Governance Development Programme

## Lack of dialogue and feedback between the public sector and society

The surveys reveal a persistent lack of trust in decision-making institutions, with the Seimas, the Government and other state organisations as the most distrusted. There is a clear lack of public participation when it comes to evaluating the quality of services offered by institutions, participating in elections, engaging in public consultations, and so forth. There is a lack of initiatives to involve NGOs in service delivery. Citizens harbour doubts about their ability to influence decisions both at the state and municipal levels. Proactive individuals in local communities and institutions alike need to take more initiative in engaging the public in collaborative activities and decision-making. This should encompass more dynamic, genuine cooperation with the public and an improved feedback mechanism.

The most frequently cited reasons by citizens who lack trust in public institutions or bodies include perceived indifference to people's inquiries and expectations, unreliable or unscrupulous staff, corruption, bureaucracy, and a failure to promptly address citizen concerns. Public understanding of institutional competencies remains limited, hindering effective dialogue. The survey also highlights institutional weaknesses, including inadequate attention to personalized service units, insufficient staff capacity development, and a shortage of resources for training.

Declining public involvement leads to unilateral decisions by public authorities – decisions taken without listening to the needs of the public and without their assessment and opinion. Such decisions may not only be potentially unlawful or unjustified, but also unacceptable to some citizens. The deteriorating reputation of the public sector is detrimental to the development and stability of the state. Lastly, the constitutional mandate that 'state institutions shall serve the people' is not upheld, and other constitutional principles, such as freedom of expression, the right to participate in the governance of one's country, the right to criticize the work of public authorities, freedom of assembly, are routinely disregarded and violated.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Main sources: Survey commissioned by the Ministry of the Interior 'Citizen trust in state and municipal institutions and evaluation of service quality'; data from the Office of the Government, which files individual complaints about services; annual reports of the Seimas Ombudsmen

## II. Search for solutions

On the basis of the key challenges identified by the Working Group, **thematic workshops** were organised together with the stakeholders. The primary objective was to pinpoint potential solutions (commitments to the Plan).

Focal themes of the workshops:

- Public consultation and technological solutions for public engagement.
- Data-driven decision-making.
- Dialogue between the population and the public sector.

The workshops welcomed a diverse array of stakeholders, comprising representatives from various institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and business entities. Attendance was extended to both Working Group members and delegates representing organizations actively engaged in the Working Group's initiatives. In total, 47 individuals participated in the workshops.

The workshop facilitators employed co-creation techniques tailored to the specific theme of each workshop. Before workshop sessions, participants received handouts designed to provide a deeper understanding of the workshop's focal theme. The deliberation process included a meticulous examination of the problems, aiming to uncover their root causes and formulate potential solutions. For each collaborative endeavour, a comprehensive list of practical implementation methods and alternatives was provided. Post-workshop, participants were encouraged to offer comments and additional input to refine these lists.

These workshops unearthed promising solutions to address challenges and concerns related to transparency and openness. Nineteen potential actions were formulated on the basis of the proposals. They were grouped into five levels based on the nature and anticipated impact of the action:

1. [A summary list of possible actions \(in Lithuanian\)](#)
2. [A detailed list of possible actions \(In Lithuanian\)](#)

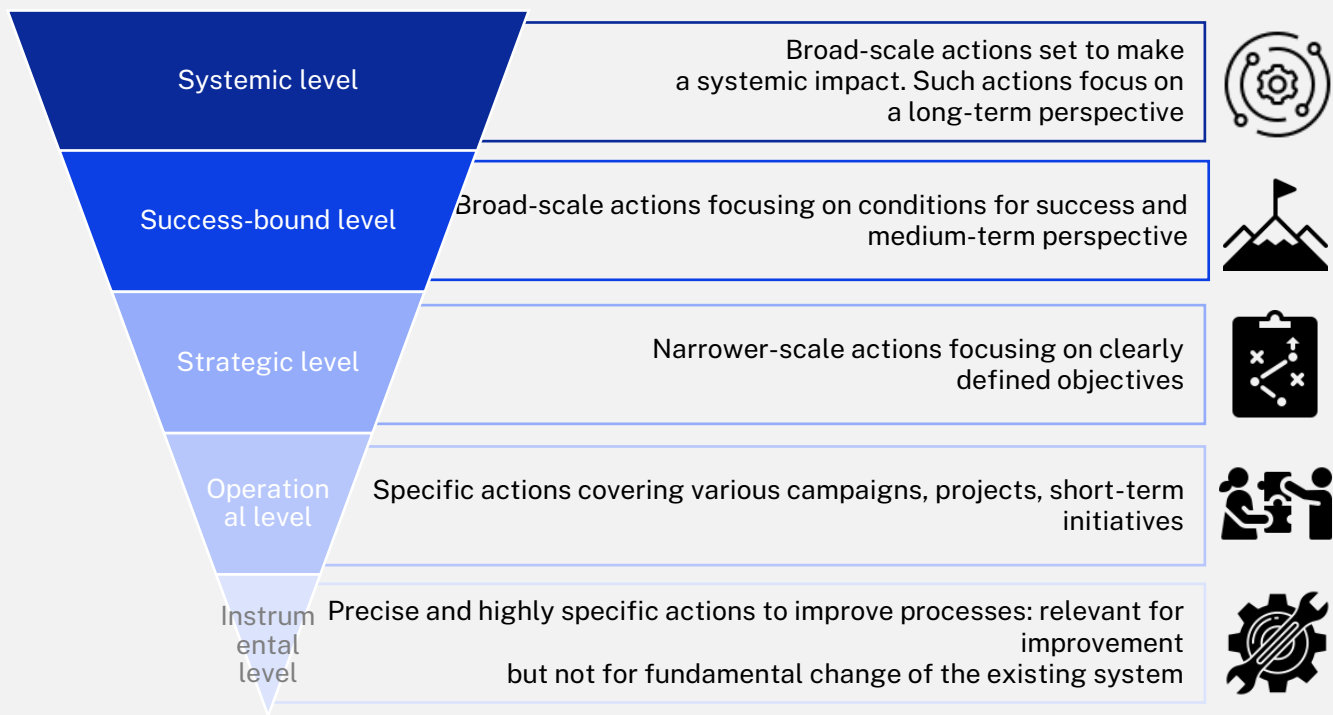


### III. Commitment selection process

The openness-related solutions, which emerged during the workshop and represented potential commitments to the Plan, were submitted to the Working Group for consideration and **selection of 3-5 commitments** for the next two years.

To facilitate the selection, facilitator-led creative workshops were held. The proposed actions were categorized into five levels based on their nature and anticipated impact, as illustrated below.

The actions to the Plan were selected from the list of actions covering the systemic, success-bound, and strategic levels.



**Three key actions and complementary activities have been selected for the Plan:**

- **Streamlining the institutional legislative process and establishing a common framework for legislative oversight.** The complementary action - introducing a mandatory requirement to use data to inform (or evaluate) policy decisions and legislation (with particular attention to impact assessment).
- **Building a customer-centric approach and likewise-oriented service quality in the public sector.** Complementary actions - testing good communication practices and innovative ways of engaging with different focus groups (young people,

vulnerable groups), updating the public consultation standard and ensuring its practical application.

- **Implementing measures to strengthen NGOs** (with particular regard to strengthening the capacity of public bodies to communicate with NGOs and to introduce these measures as a cross-cutting principle across all ministries).

While improving the utilization of data for decision-making was not chosen as a separate action, it is important to note that the lack of the utilisation of data was recognized as a significant issue, and thus considerations were made of a comprehensive integration of activities related to data analytics and data utilization.

The selected commitments were forwarded to the implementing agencies, including the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of the Interior, the Office of the Government, and the Public Management Agency, for further elaboration. These descriptions were developed in consultation with the stakeholder groups. After a meeting with representatives from the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and the Open Government Working Group, a joint decision was made to leave out the initiative focused on strengthening NGO capabilities from the Open Government Plan. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour explained that a significant number of actions, fine-tuned during the creative workshops, were either already in progress or scheduled under other strategic documents.

The formulation of the three actions followed the discussions with potential implementing agencies and stakeholder groups:

- I. **Streamlining the legislative decision-making process at the institutional and Government levels and establishing a common framework for legislative oversight** | Responsible bodies – the Ministry of Justice, and the Office of the Government
- II. **Building a customer-centric approach and customer-based dialogue practices in the public sector** | Responsible bodies – the Public Management Agency, the Office of the Government, and the Ministry of the Interior
- III. **Enabling and ensuring the development of the co-creation process** | Responsible body – the Office of the Government

Initial descriptions were submitted to the Working Group and made available for public consultation. They were subsequently revised according to the feedback received.

## IV. Approval of the final Open Government Plan

The entire process of the preparation of the Plan provided for **public consultation**, allowing individuals to provide comments on the Plan's principles and content through written submissions. Information was disseminated on the e-Citizen portal, social networks, and shared with social partners<sup>12</sup>.

The final Plan, revised according to Working Group's comments, was electronically submitted to the Working Group for their consideration.

The Plan was finally approved **with the agreement of the ministerial representatives at a meeting of ministerial representatives (vice-ministers, and chancellors)**, held on 12 September 2023.

The approved Plan was submitted to the representatives of the international Initiative 'Open Government Partnership' and made public on the Initiative's portal.

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<sup>12</sup> Public consultation published at: <https://epilietis.lrv.lt/lt/atvira-vyriausybe-3/atviros-vyriausybes-partneryste/sestasis-veiksmu-planas> and <https://epilietis.lrv.lt/lt/konsultacijos/viesoji-konsultacija-del-atviros-vyriausybes-veiksmu-plano>

Information about the preparation of the Plan published in the press release: <https://epilietis.lrv.lt/lt/naujienos/pradedamas-rengti-2023-2025-m-atviros-vyriausybes-planas> and on Citizens' Ministry social media platforms: <https://www.facebook.com/pilieciuministerija>, <https://www.linkedin.com/company/pilie%C4%8Di%C5%B3-ministerija> and <https://www.instagram.com/pilieciuministerija/>

# Actions under 2024-2025 Open Government Plan

<b>Action I</b>	
<b>Streamlining the legislative decision-making process at the institutional and government levels and establishing a common framework for legislative oversight</b>	
<i>January 2024 - December 2025</i>	
Brief description of the action	The objective is to establish well-structured and high-quality legislative processes that facilitate public consultation and evidence-based decision-making
Lead implementing agency/body	The Ministry of Justice and the Office of the Government
Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Public sector bodies: ministries, bodies subordinate to ministries</li><li>• Civil society representatives: umbrella NGOs, experts and researchers in the field of openness development</li><li>• Other stakeholders: the Office of the Seimas</li></ul>
<b>Challenge description</b>	
Key challenge addressed	<p>Absence of systematic, coherent, evidence-based, and transparent legislative processes. Despite the adoption of all necessary regulatory measures, their practical implementation remains scarce.</p> <p>This context offers minimal opportunities for the engagement and participation of civil society and NGOs. Stakeholders are involved either belatedly or not at all in project preparation, often due to tight deadlines, limited communication channels, and unclear drafting stages. Furthermore, the means for citizen involvement and their tangible impact</p>

	<p>on decision-making remain ambiguous. Engagement continues as insufficient, ineffective, and often superficial.</p>
<p>The root causes for the problem</p>	<p>The causes manifest themselves across various dimensions:</p> <p><b>Inconsistent legislative processes</b>   As per the 2018 National Audit Office audit report, approximately 50% of draft legislation is rushed through or adopted with urgency.<sup>13</sup> Although the proportion of such documents has nearly halved during the 2020-2024 parliamentary term (29.14% in 2016-2020 to compare with 15.96% in 2020-2024), stakeholders argue that the legislative process continues to operate in an <i>ad hoc</i> manner. Public consultations in the pre-legislative phases are rare, as solutions are often predetermined without comprehensive engagement.<sup>14</sup></p> <p>It is also important that other legislation, including regulatory orders of ministers and bodies subordinate to ministries, are not properly and consistently coordinated with the authorities concerned. Where the authorities concerned have not been identified, the draft order is not published on the Draft Legislation Information System of the Seimas (TAIS) and the public is not given the opportunity to react to it. In this scenario, documents are signed without public consultation, and legislative procedures fail to adhere to the principles of openness and transparency, neglecting to guarantee public input in the absence of alternative forms of consultation. In practice, the draft of any regulatory act (order) should ideally be published in the TAIS before adoption, allowing for consultations and feedback.</p> <p><b>The legislative initiative institute is practically unimplementable</b>   The legislative initiative institute is seldom put to practice, even though the Law on Legislative Framework provides for it. It remains underutilized and often misunderstood by institutions, resulting in missed opportunities for obtaining pertinent legislative information and preparing for further meaningful public consultations. Stakeholder institutions, particularly in the non-governmental sector, struggle to anticipate when legislative initiatives will be enacted, hindering their ability to prepare and respond effectively.</p>

<sup>13</sup> National Audit Office, National Audit Office audit report: Legislative process 2018, <https://www.valstybeskontrolė.lt/LT/Product/23770/teisekuros-procesas>

<sup>14</sup> Results of a series of public consultations and interviews with lobbyists and business associations

	<p><b>Lack of data utilisation in public sector decision-making</b>   The public sector is still facing challenges related to the lack of open data sets, data quality, and lack of expertise among public sector personnel. Considering these factors, data-driven decisions may still rely on erroneous information and result in incorrect solutions.</p>
<p><b>Action description</b></p>	
<p>Previous solution</p>	<p>In 2021, attempts were made to regulate and standardize ministerial legislative process by making the provisions of the Government’s Rules of Procedure apply <i>mutatis mutandis</i> to legislation, but there has been no support from the ministries.</p>
<p>Planned solution/action</p>	<p><b>Regulatory changes to the ministerial legislative process</b>   The aim is to ensure that the legislative standard, procedures, and deadlines set out in the Government’s Rules of Procedure are also applied at the level of ministries, government agencies and bodies subordinate to ministries in the drafting and collaborative consensus-building of legislation they adopt. Strengthened controls would ensure that drafts that lack proper consensus do not surface on a Government meeting agenda.</p> <p><b>Publication of the legislative plan</b>   An upgrade of the TAIS is currently under preparation,. It will enable integrated monitoring of the entire drafting process from an initial idea to a final outcome. Until the TAIS is upgraded, the action will enable the publication and monitoring of the planned work of the Seimas session, and the drafting process of other key legislation (either on TAIS or on the My Government portal; the My Government portal operates on a different principle and it would not duplicate TAIS in essence, and the formats for presenting information on these two channels would also differ).</p> <p><b>Methodological guidance and education to ensure the practical implementation of a quality legislative process</b>  The methodological guidance is a set of guidelines for public authorities and their staff who initiate and draft legislation.</p> <p>The methodological guidance would cover the whole legislative process: it would highlight the importance of each stage (including public consultation) for quality legislation and its sustainability, thereby structuring and synthesising the knowledge needed by drafters and other actors involved in the legislative process.</p>

	<p>The education campaign would focus on developing competences for data-driven and evidence-based decision-making.</p> <p><b>Stakeholder education  </b> This action aims to facilitate meaningful involvement of stakeholders in legislative processes. It encompasses education initiatives, communication campaigns, and other activities designed to enhance awareness of the legislative process and opportunities for stakeholder engagement. A strong emphasis will be placed on equipping stakeholders with the skills to utilize available data for making well-informed recommendations for improved legislation.</p>
Intended outcomes	<p>The overarching goal is to ensure a systematic, cohesive, and transparent legislative process. Key deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced civic engagement in decision-making (measured by both the quantity and quality of legislative proposals).</li> <li>• Practical application of Methodological guidelines and exchange of best practices.</li> <li>• To measure the impact of this action, a monitoring indicator will be developed to show the proportion of correctly or incorrectly drafted legislation.</li> </ul> <p>It is also important to note that the actions will partially contribute to the intended outcomes for the development of the justice system under the 2022-2030 Development Programme run by the Ministry of Justice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proportion of laws subjected to ex-post evaluation out of the total number of laws adopted in 2020 and beyond (a deliverable for 2030: 3%)</li> </ul>
<b>The role of the action in advancing openness</b>	
How will the action contribute to increasing transparency, accountability, and public participation in decision-making?	<p>The Model for monitoring legislative process will enhance the transparency of legislative processes, enabling the public to follow the actual decision-making in progress.</p> <p>The data-driven legislative process will bolster the quality and clarity of decision-making.</p> <p>Education campaigns will empower civil society to engage meaningfully in legislative processes. The action will pave the way for more transparent communication of ongoing processes.</p>

Action implementation plan			
Implementation step	Expected practical outcome	End date	Stakeholders
<b>Regulatory changes to the ministerial legislative process</b>	Established requirements for the ministerial legislative process:	Q1 2024	<b>Responsible body</b> – the Ministry of Justice <b>Stakeholders</b> – the Office of the Government, ministries
<b>Publication of the legislative plan</b>	Ensured publication of the legislative plan	Q3 2024	<b>Responsible body</b> – the Office of the Government <b>Stakeholders</b> – the Ministry of Justice, the Office of the Seimas
<b>Methodological guidance and education to ensure the practical implementation of a quality legislative process</b>	The methodological guidance developed for public authorities and their staff to improve the quality of legislation	Q1 2024	<b>Responsible body</b> – the Ministry of Justice <b>Stakeholders</b> – the Office of the Government, ministries
	Training/consultation cycle for public authorities involved in drafting legislation	Q3 2024	
<b>Stakeholder education</b>	Education campaign on legislative participation held for stakeholder representatives	Q4 2025	<b>Responsible body</b> – the Office of the Government <b>Stakeholders</b> – the Ministry of Justice, NGO and business organisations involved in legislative processes
<b>Contact information</b>			



<p>Full name, position held, telephone no. and email of the responsible person</p>	<p>Darius Trinkūnas, Chief Advisor, Legislative Policy Group, Ministry of Justice, <a href="mailto:darius.trinkunas@tm.lt">darius.trinkunas@tm.lt</a>, +370 (674) 25696</p> <p>Ieva Kimontaitė, Adviser, Open Government Unit, Government Communications Department, Office of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, <a href="mailto:ieva.kimontaite@lrv.lt">ieva.kimontaite@lrv.lt</a>, +370 5 2098782</p>
<p>What civil society organisations, private sector representatives or other stakeholders are you planning to involve in the implementation of the commitment?</p>	<p>Planned involvement of umbrella NGOs, business, and lobbyist associations.</p> <p>Planned public consultations on the publication of the legislative plan and education campaigns for stakeholders.</p>

**Action II**  
**Building a customer-centric approach and customer-based dialogue practices in the public sector.**

*January 2024 - December 2025*

Brief description of the action	The action is aimed at strengthening dialogue and feedback between the public sector and society. This requires building customer-centric approach in the public sector and active implementation of practices rooted in customer-centricity, service quality, and the enhancement of dialogue within the public sector.
Lead implementing agency	The Public Management Agency, the Office of the Government, and the Ministry of the Interior
Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public sector bodies providing public and administrative services to the population, shaping public policy in the field of public administration, and ensuring the dissemination of good practices in the field of customer services.</li> <li>• Civil society representatives: citizens, recipients and users of public services who seek information and contact the institutions for help with issues of their concern. Also non-governmental and private sector stakeholders.</li> <li>• Other stakeholders: service providers, field experts.</li> </ul>
<b>Challenge description</b>	
Key challenge addressed	<p>The action aims to address the lack of dialogue and feedback between the public sector and society.</p> <p>The development of dialogue is fundamentally influenced by the trust in the government, which is, in the eyes of the people, considerably low.<sup>15</sup> The reasons for this lack of trust include staff's indifference to people's concerns and expectations, their perceived unreliability and potential lack of honesty, and a deficiency in competence and empathy. This is further substantiated by the declining efficiency rate in administrative services and service delivery observed in recent years<sup>16</sup>, pointing to issues related to</p>

<sup>15</sup> In 2021, six out of ten residents trusted state and municipal institutions. Survey commissioned by the Ministry of the Interior 'Citizen trust in state and municipal institutions and evaluation of service quality', 2022, Vilnius.

<sup>16</sup> In 2021, the efficiency rate in the provision of administrative services and service delivery stood at 0.82 points. Survey commissioned by the Ministry of the Interior 'Citizen trust in state and municipal institutions and evaluation of service quality', 2022, Vilnius.

	<p>accessibility, employee competence, and responsiveness in addressing problems. Additionally, prolonged administrative and service delivery processes often impede the pace of communication.</p> <p>The accessibility of information, in its essence, should also promote dialogue between the government and the public. Nevertheless, despite the growing accessibility of information within public sector institutions, individuals often find difficulties in locating the information they require. This challenge stems from the surplus of information, a lack of structure, and a shortage of easily understandable content. In 2021, the transparency and accessibility rate of publicly available information from government institutions stood at 0.58 points.<sup>17</sup></p> <p>Public understanding of institutional competencies and governance framework remains limited, hindering effective dialogue. The percentage of the population unaware of how to reach out to authorities, offer suggestions, or file complaints is steadily on the rise<sup>18</sup>. The diminishing public engagement can result in one-sided decisions by the authorities, frequently failing to address the population's needs and expectations. The deteriorating reputation of the public sector is detrimental to the development and stability of the state. Lastly, the constitutional mandate 'state institutions shall serve the people' is not upheld.</p>
<p>The root causes for the problem</p>	<p><b>Lack of leadership and responsibility for service quality and finding the best solution</b>   Customer service units are not given sufficient attention within the organization and strategic planning of institutions. Policy-making ministries fail to establish service requirements, quality benchmarks, and performance indicators for the subordinate bodies concerned, resulting in a sluggish pace of change implementation in this field. The absence of inter-institutional cooperation often confines the resolution of citizens' concerns to the institutional level, lacking a systemic and collaborative approach to problem-solving.</p> <p><b>The absence of standardized customer-centric and service quality-oriented practices</b>   While legislation outlines fundamental requirements for serving individuals and handling their requests and complaints, these provisions are often subject to individual interpretation by institutions, leading to disparities in practices. There is no consistent service standard to build a uniform practice, leaving citizens without a mechanism to set service and quality expectations for institutions. Until now, a comprehensive policy on customer-oriented service and its quality has not been developed, leading to</p>

<sup>17</sup>Survey commissioned by the Ministry of the Interior 'Citizen trust in state and municipal institutions and evaluation of service quality', 2022, Vilnius.

<sup>18</sup>43% wouldn't know how to submit proposals and complaints to a state or municipal institution. Survey commissioned by the Ministry of the Interior 'Citizen trust in state and municipal institutions and evaluation of service quality', 2022, Vilnius.

ambiguity regarding its components, advantages, implementation procedures, and an absence of a defined quality assessment mechanism.

**Insufficient service competency levels and the dissemination of best practices** | Public sector institutions individually address issues related to the qualification improvement of their employees. This decentralized approach sometimes leads to a lack of leadership and does not always ensure an adequate level of knowledge and competence among service personnel. There is no common platform for learning, knowledge, and experience exchange to be used by service staff so as to enhance necessary skills.

**Lengthy, bureaucratic service delivery processes reduce the speed of communication and trust** | While more services are being moved online, thereby becoming more accessible, undefined service delivery processes and redundant procedures continue to hinder the efficiency of service provision. Proactive communication by institutions can often reduce customer flows. Therefore, it is prudent to develop dissemination of customer-centric and needs-based information, leveraging digital and other communication-enhancing solutions.

#### Action description

Previous solution

- Given the situation, the updating efforts have been directed towards formal legal requirements for handling individual requests and complaints, and service standards for public administration entities - to little avail, however.
- Various EU support investment measures have been implemented in municipalities, and a centralized project 'Public administration initiatives to improve service quality and customer service' has been carried out. Unfortunately, some actions failed to yield expected results, or their impact was insignificant.
- The Office of the Government initiated an assessment of ministerial strategic plans and provided examples of setting goals and indicators for the service area. However, there has been lack of attention to this field to enable their implementation.
- The Seimas Ombudsmen consistently emphasize the need for closer communication with citizens and the preparation of appropriate responses. However, these recommendations are often only partially implemented at the institutional level.
- Since 2018, a network of customer service specialists has been established to facilitate the sharing of best practices and knowledge, promoting positive improvements. Certain institutions have taken the lead in implementing advanced customer service and enhancing service quality practices.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Government Programme consistently incorporates measures aimed at fostering a customer-centric approach. These efforts are already underway, including the development of service description standards, a review of commitments, and a collaborative project with the UNDP to establish a customer satisfaction index.</li> </ul>
Planned solution/action	<p>As a response to this challenge, efforts will be made to cultivate a customer-centric approach across the public sector and actively implement practices rooted in customer-centricity, service quality, and the enhancement of dialogue in the public sector.</p> <p>The selected paths for implementation are as follows:</p> <p><b>Building a customer-centric approach within institutions by enhancing competencies and sharing best practices (responsible bodies – the Public Management Agency, the Office of the Government, and the Ministry of the Interior):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating content for building competency in customer-centric mindset development and maintaining a continuously updated virtual learning and knowledge-sharing environment for public sector representatives. These training resources would incorporate innovative processes and cutting-edge teaching methodologies.</li> <li>• Implementing a series of hands-on training sessions designed for public sector staff, covering various aspects of customer-centric approaches: customer-centric policies, strategic planning for changes in customer service, revision, and optimization of customer service, managing customer service and its quality, content of customer service standard and its application, effective communication, and dialogue with people, etc.</li> <li>• Establishing and testing a mechanism for incentivizing the implementation of innovations in customer service and service quality improvement in the public sector (e.g., awards, assistance from foreign experts, etc.).</li> <li>• Developing a network of competencies for service professionals, fostering partnerships with forward-thinking organizations. This network would facilitate discussions, practical scenario simulations, also knowledge and experience exchange.</li> </ul>

- Encouraging the cultivation of best practices within municipalities by engaging municipal staff in competency development processes, ensuring a broader dissemination of customer-centric principles at the local level.

**Implementing systemic measures for a customer-centric approach in the public sector (led by the Ministry of the Interior):**

- Developing an Exemplary customer service standard, which would detail the provisions governing the handling of customer requests and complaints in public administration entities.
- Evaluating the information obligations imposed by state administration on individuals (customers) applying for administrative services and presenting recommendations to the Government for reducing these obligations.
- Updating the methodology for calculating the Public service customer satisfaction index to make it more accessible and widely applicable for entities administering and providing public services.

Developing Guidelines for the administrative and public service standards to help building a more uniform practice of administering and delivering services, which would be better aligned with the needs of service recipients.

Intended outcomes

By 2026, the customer-centric approach will be actively cultivated in the public sector, along with the practices rooted in customer-centricity, service quality, and the enhancement of dialogue.

- A virtual learning and knowledge-sharing environment will be created, enabling institutional staff to acquire sustainable customer-centric skills. This will create the potential for implementing customer service improvement initiatives at the institutional level. This will lead to a stronger overall orientation of public governance institutions toward service recipients and service quality and will generate more institutional service quality initiatives.
- Systemic measures (applicable to all entities providing and administering administrative or public services) will be developed and implemented. These measures will help standardize the processes of delivering administrative and public services, enhance transparency and efficiency in these processes, further improve the quality of administrative and public services, and reduce the administrative burden on service recipients.

This action will contribute to the indicators set forth in the Public Governance Development Programme under 2022-2030 Development Programme run by the Ministry of the Interior.

- Administrative service provision and service efficiency rate (deliverable for 2025: 0.90 points, for 2030: 0.92 points).
- The share of the population who sought assistance from public management institutions and found the services provided satisfactory (deliverable for 2030: 90%).

### The role of the action in advancing openness

How will the action contribute to increasing transparency, accountability and public participation in decision-making?

Stronger competencies of public sector employees in fostering a customer-centric approach should naturally increase the responsibility and accountability of both employees and institutions towards the population. The required knowledge facilitates innovations in customer service and service quality improvement, intended to for information transparency, consumer opinion research, quality assessment, strategic planning, and more.

The cultivation of the required customer-centric competencies and capabilities among employees will enable people to more actively express their opinions on the quality of service or assistance they receive. A smooth process for handling requests and complaints, coupled with proactive efforts to address issues of concern to individuals, will enhance public trust in institutions. Transparency and communication from institutions will encourage mutual dialogue.

### Action implementation plan

Implementation step	Expected practical outcome	End date	Stakeholders
<b>Building a customer-centric approach within institutions by enhancing competencies and sharing best practices</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Creation of the content for building competency in customer-centric mindset development and a virtual learning and knowledge-sharing environment for public sector representatives.</li> <li>2. Implementation of a series of hands-on training sessions designed for public sector staff,</li> </ol>	Q4 2025	<p><b>Responsible body</b> – the Public Management Agency</p> <p><b>Stakeholders</b> – the Office of the Government, ministries, their subordinate bodies, other public sector organisations, municipal administrations, experts in relevant field, service providers.</p>

	<p>covering various aspects of customer-centric approaches.</p> <p>3. Tested mechanism for incentivizing the implementation of innovations in customer service and service quality improvement in the public sector.</p> <p>4. Development of the network of competencies for service professionals, fostering partnerships with forward-thinking organizations.</p>	Q4 2024	<p><b>Responsible body</b> – the Office of the Government</p> <p><b>Stakeholders</b> – ministries, their subordinate bodies, other public sector organisations, municipal administrations</p>
<b>Implementing systemic measures for a customer-centric approach in the public sector</b>	1. Development of an Exemplary customer service standard.	Q1 2024	<b>Responsible body</b> – the Ministry of the Interior
	2. Submitted recommendations to the Government for reducing information obligations imposed by state administration on individuals (customers) applying for administrative services.	Q2 2024	<b>Stakeholders</b> – ministries and other entities providing and administering administrative and public services
	3. Approved updated methodology for calculating the Public service customer satisfaction index.	Q4 2024	
	4. Developed and approved Guidelines for the administrative and public service standards.	Q1 2024	
<b>Contact information</b>			



<p>Full name, position held, telephone no. and email of the responsible person</p>	<p>Artūras Palekas, Head of Public Management Agency, <a href="mailto:arturas.palekas@vva.gov.lt">arturas.palekas@vva.gov.lt</a>, +370 5 219 6800</p> <p>Alma Bulkevičienė, Head of Public Administration and Local Self-Government Policy Group, Ministry of the Interior, <a href="mailto:alma.bulkeviciene@vrm.lt">alma.bulkeviciene@vrm.lt</a>, +370 5 271 7105</p>
<p>What civil society organisations, private sector representatives or other stakeholders are you planning to involve in the implementation of the commitment?</p>	<p>Plans are to involve consumer rights NGOs, private sector organisations that agree to cooperate for the purpose of developing best practice exchanges.</p> <p>The action will involve a public consultation with the focus groups for the planned training to identify their needs for competence development.</p>

<b>Action III</b>	
<b>Enabling and ensuring the development of the co-creation process</b>	
<i>January 2024 - December 2025</i>	
Brief description of the action	The action aims to facilitate and ensure the development of the co-creation process at national level.
Lead implementing agency	The Office of the Government
Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public sector bodies: ministries, bodies subordinate to ministries.</li> <li>• Civil society representatives: NGOs that promote civic engagement, experts and researchers in the field of openness development.</li> <li>• Other stakeholders: the Office of the Seimas</li> </ul>
<b>Challenge description</b>	
Key challenge addressed	<p>The action aims to address the lack of a functioning mechanism for civic engagement in decision-making and the lack of dialogue with the public.</p> <p>The Government's Rules of Procedure, amended in 2022, sets out more detailed and thorough procedures for public consultation. Despite the regulatory changes, the implementation of the public consultation mechanism remains challenging in public sector institutions, highlighting either the insufficient time allocated for drafting legislation or the limited meaningful engagement of the public, as evidenced by their minimal input into the ultimate decision-making process. From 2018 to 2021, there was an annual average of 518 draft laws approved by the Government. However, in numerous instances, public authorities did not engage in consultations with the public regarding potential issues or solutions before embarking on the process of amending the legal framework.<sup>19</sup> According to STRATA, consultation is particularly rare in</p>

<sup>19</sup>The rationale for the Public Governance Development Programme under 2022-2030 Development Programme run by the Ministry of the Interior, 2022, [https://vrm.lrv.lt/uploads/vrm/documents/files/LT\\_versija/Vie%C5%A1asis%20valdymas/2022-2030%20met%C5%B3%20Vie%C5%A1ojo%20valdymo%20pl%C4%97tros%20programos%20pagrindimas.pdf](https://vrm.lrv.lt/uploads/vrm/documents/files/LT_versija/Vie%C5%A1asis%20valdymas/2022-2030%20met%C5%B3%20Vie%C5%A1ojo%20valdymo%20pl%C4%97tros%20programos%20pagrindimas.pdf).

	<p>legislative impact assessments.<sup>20</sup> This results in a situation where legislative initiatives too seldom rely on factual information and data acquired through engagement with focus groups responsible for implementing and enforcing the legislation. Consultation practices at the drafting stage also suffer from deficiencies, primarily attributed to the frequently ad hoc and unplanned nature of the legislative process when evaluating the impact of draft legislation. In the majority of cases, the public is presented with a specific amendment to a legal regulation in the form of a draft law that has already been formulated, which, both in terms of its structure and content, is often challenging for the majority of the public to understand.</p> <p>Thus, while the legal framework is in place, the public consultation mechanism and other initiatives to involve the public in decision-making are difficult to implement in practice. This leads to a lack of quality in legislation and decision-making.</p>
<p>The root causes for the problem</p>	<p><b>Lack of consistency, creativity, and the efficiency in the process</b>   It has been noted that some governmental institutions engage with the public but formally in decision-making: failing to actively attract a broader audience to consultations or present content in a comprehensible and engaging manner. The deficiency in the quality of consultations is exacerbated by the absence of preplanned public engagement, resulting in a lack of clear guidelines, quality criteria, or adequate time for such engagement.</p> <p>Furthermore, considering feedback from staff responsible for organizing consultation processes, the methodological tools previously developed for consultations and engagement are not user-friendly. A number of new good practices and methods of involvement have also emerged since the first methodological guidance for public consultation was drawn up. It is therefore important to update the guidance and make it practical.</p> <p><b>Low level of competences</b>   Public authorities lack the motivation and competences to organise successful public engagement activities in public governance decision-making processes. It is often difficult to find the right stakeholders or appropriate and innovative ways to engage people even in the case where there is a will to do so.</p> <p>It is also important to note the high turnover of staff in the public sector, which often makes investments in skills development unsustainable.</p>

<sup>20</sup> STRATA, *Evaluation of impact assessment of regulatory initiatives in Lithuania*, 2021, <https://strata.gov.lt/images/tyrimai/2021-metai/20211004-PV-praktikos-Lietuvoje-vertinimas.pdf>.

	<p><b>Lack of trust and engagement</b>   Like many other nations, Lithuania is experiencing a decline in trust in the state, along with reduced confidence in key government institutions, and there is a perceived lack of power to make decisions.<sup>21</sup></p> <p>While the transparency and accessibility of information held by the public sector are increasing, some indicators however prevent us from concluding that Lithuania’s public governance has become sufficiently open, inclusive, and encouraging public participation in governance processes. According to the Lithuanian Corruption Map, only 11% of the population in Lithuania saw decision-making as open in 2022<sup>22</sup>, and the civic power index in 2022 was only 35.9 out of a possible 100 points<sup>23</sup>. Which means that Lithuanian society is still relatively passive in civic engagement, it fails to utilise engagement opportunities, feels unable to influence decisions or get effective feedback. Accordingly, the indicator for citizen participation in public governance processes is still insufficient: 50% in 2019, (i.e. only about half of the population are aware of their opportunities and ways to participate in public governance).<sup>24</sup> Challenges persist in effectively utilizing public participation outcomes when formulating and endorsing public governance decisions. Despite the potential for new technological solutions to rapidly, simply, and cost-effectively reach citizens and gather their input on pressing matters, Lithuania lacks a culture of public dialogue, which leads to underutilization of this opportunity.</p>
<b>Action description</b>	
Previous solution	<p>Following the implementation of the OECD recommendations on the development of open government (2015), Lithuania has developed methodological tools for conducting public consultations, strengthened the competence of civil servants, and carried out targeted communication, including opportunities for the public to participate in decision-making. While this led to an increase in the number of public consultations carried out by ministries in the pre-pandemic period (around 300 per year), by 2020, the number of consultations had fallen sharply (62 consultations), and the level of maturity of consultations remained quite low.</p>

<sup>21</sup> OECD, „Building Trust to Reinforce Democracy: Main Findings from the 2021 OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions“, 2022.

<sup>22</sup> Special Investigation Service, Lithuanian Map of Corruption, 2022/2023.

<sup>23</sup> Civic Society Institute, Civic Empowerment Index, 2022.

<sup>24</sup> Survey commissioned by the Ministry of the Interior ‘Citizen trust in state and municipal institutions and evaluation of service quality’ 2019.

	<p>Following the identification of a potential gap in the legal framework for openness, amendments were made to the Government's Rules of Procedure in 2022. It delineates instances requiring public consultation, defines the purposes for which information and data typically collected during consultations can be used, and elucidates the criteria for presenting the outcomes to decision-makers.</p> <p>Various co-creation practices have been tested, including Citizens' Council for the preparation of Lithuania's vision for the future 'Lithuania 2050', which was based on the principles of deliberative democracy.</p> <p>Nevertheless, co-creation initiatives are quite rare in practice, and public sector staff still lack competences and best practice examples of engagement.</p>
Planned solution/action	<p>Solutions include activities that will aim to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish a habit of public consultation and improve the quality of consultation through an incentive mechanism.</li> <li>2. Enable the public sector to move towards a more parallel relationship with the public by introducing co-creation practices, improving communication and creating space for dialogue.</li> </ol> <p><b>Dissemination of best practice in public engagement</b>   Since best practices in public consultation and public engagement in decision-making is insufficient, the action will aim to promote the implementation of high-quality public consultations and other innovative public participation initiatives. This will be done through the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building a library of best practices in co-creation and various engagement initiatives. A publicly accessible library will enable analysis of ongoing engagement projects, practices and best examples, according to the topic or issue at hand.</li> <li>• Organising best practice awards in co-creation, so as to also disseminate information on institutions that demonstrate quality promotion of collaborative mechanisms. The awards will also include various incentives (e.g., by mobilising international organisations and their support for the initiatives).</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a functioning network of cooperation where public sector staff can share best practices and discuss issues at stake. The network could also include representatives of civil society.</li> </ul> <p><b>Building capabilities in co-creation and public consultation</b>   To build the basis for dialogue between the public and the government, it is important that capabilities are regularly honed. To this end, the following activities should be implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updating methodological tools for the public sector. Ensuring user involvement in the creation process would result in user-friendly instructions for co-creation and public consultation.</li> <li>• Creating continuously updated learning channel for public sector representatives. These training resources would incorporate innovative processes and cutting-edge teaching methodologies.</li> </ul> <p><b>Co-creation and public consultation pilot initiatives</b>   These initiatives aim to practically implement and disseminate best practices, and promote process of learning by doing.</p> <p><b>Improving the co-creation platform</b>   Technological solutions are needed both for the public sector as the organiser of a public engagement initiative and for civil society as a user and a participant in the consultation. The aim is to ensure a continuous flow of information on ongoing consultations and similar initiatives.</p>
Intended outcomes	<p>This action aims to create a framework for quality cooperation between government and society through a co-creation and public consultation mechanism. The period of change is until 2026.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased public consultation maturity (by 2030, all ministries will have reached maturity level 1 or 2; by 2025, 10 ministries).</li> <li>• Public engagement in the initial phases of legislative processes, such as enhancing the percentage of publicly available consultations on the e.Citizen portal, where matters and potential solutions are discussed.</li> <li>• At least 4 projects on best co-creation and consultation practices implemented with the support of international organisations.</li> </ul>
<b>The role of the action in advancing openness</b>	

How will the action contribute to increasing transparency, accountability and public participation in decision-making?

The action will make a major contribution to public engagement in decision-making, as it will aim to develop better and more open practices in the implementation of public consultations. The action will not only increase the number of public participation initiatives, but it will also improve their quality, thus increasing the impact of public engagement.

**Action implementation plan**

<b>Implementation step</b>	<b>Expected practical outcome</b>	<b>End date</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>
<b>Dissemination of best practice in public engagement</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A library of best practices in various public engagement initiatives.</li> <li>2. Best practice awards in co-creation (at least one).</li> <li>3. An active and permanent network set up to share experience and best practice.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Q3 2024</li> <li>2. Q1 2025</li> <li>3. Q4 2024</li> </ol>	Ministries, other public sector organisations, municipal administrations, the Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania, NGOs operating in the field of civil society
<b>Building capabilities in co-creation and public consultation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Updated methodological tools for organising public consultations.</li> <li>2. Preparation of methodological tools for co-creation initiatives.</li> <li>3. Creation of continuously updated learning channel for public sector representatives.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Q2 2024</li> <li>2. Q2 2024</li> <li>3. Q2 2025</li> </ol>	Public sector employees
<b>Co-creation and public consultation pilot initiatives</b>	At least 4 projects on best co-creation and consultation practices implemented.	Q2 2025	Ministries, other public sector organisations, municipal administrations, the Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania, NGOs operating in the field of civil society

<b>Improving the co-creation platform</b>	Upgraded platform for public consultations and co-creation initiatives.	Q2 2024	Ministries, other public sector organisations, NGOs operating in the field of civil society
<b>Contact information</b>			
Full name, position held, telephone no. and email of the responsible person.	Ieva Kimontaitė, Adviser, Open Government Unit, Government Communications Department, Office of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, <a href="mailto:ieva.kimontaite@lrv.lt">ieva.kimontaite@lrv.lt</a> , + 370 664 65831		
What civil society organisations, private sector representatives or other stakeholders are you planning to involve in the implementation of the commitment?	Stakeholders to be involved for the purpose of the implementation of the commitment: NGOs, experts in the field of openness development, users of public services, and public sector employees.		