Open Government Partnership

Estonia: 2014-2016 End of Term Report

Estonia's second action plan focused on participation in policymaking, public service improvements, budget transparency, and open data. Although most commitments were completed, changes in government practice mostly were minor. Moving forward, it is important to raise awareness of the action plan's results to ensure greater use of the newly created tools and to improve opportunities for public engagement.

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a voluntary international initiative that aims to secure commitments from governments to their citizenry to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. The Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) carries out a review of the activities of each OGP-participating country against national OGP commitments.

This report summarizes the results from June 2014 to June 2016, which is the official implementation period of the second OGP action plan in Estonia. It also includes relevant developments up to September 2016. The third action plan was developed and approved for 2016 to 2018 on 30 June 2016.

In Estonia, the Government Office coordinated the OGP process in collaboration with the OGP Civil Society Roundtable (CSR). In addition, there were different ministries and public agencies involved in the process. Since the second action plan, an OGP Coordinating Board in Estonia, which consists of governmental and nongovernmental representatives, has a central role in coordinating, evaluating, and monitoring the implementation of the action plan.

Table 1: At a Glance		Midterm	End of term
Number of commitments		23	23
Level of completion			
Completed		5	13
Substantial		14	8
Limited		4	2
Not started		0	0
Number of commitments with:			
Clear relevance to OGP values		22	
Transformative potential impact		0	
Substantial or complete implementation		19	21
All three (⊘)		0	0
Did it open government?	Major	2	
	Outstanding	0	
Moving forward			
Number of commitments carried over to next action plan:		9	

Estonia's 2014-2016 OGP action plan focused on improving public participation, public funds transparency, public services quality, and open data. Several commitments such as commitments 3.1, 2.6, 4.2, and 4.3 were modified significantly or updated during the period of implementation. Some of the commitments such as commitments 2.5 were overly ambitious given the length of the action plan. Other commitments such as commitment 5.1 lacked the necessary funding for implementation.

At the time of writing this report, the Government Office of Estonia had presented a new action plan for 2016 to 2018. Three commitments of the second plan are carried over partially to the next action plan, and an additional six commitments (2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3) are carried over directly. However, at the time of writing this report, the government had not presented a final self-assessment report for the second action plan.

Dr. Kristiina Tõnnisson prepared this report.

Consultation with civil society during implementation

Countries participating in OGP follow a process for consultation during development and implementation of their OGP action plan. According to the previous IRM report, the development process of the action plan was a positive one that involved various nongovernmental organizations and different sectors of society.[1] Civil society organizations (CSOs), the employers' association, the trade union association, and the Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which represented the private sector, all provided their viewpoints. An informal advisory group called the OGP consultation board also played a vital role in the development of the plan. The board included secretary generals, ministry officials, and nongovernmental partners. Near the end of the process, relevant stakeholders reviewed draft commitments in thematic meetings, and citizens gave feedback and comments on the draft plan through the osale.ee website. Although the second action plan included several of their recommendations, stakeholders pointed out that the process was rushed, lacked real discussion, and many of their recommendations were left out without enough justification.[2]

Stakeholder consultation during the implementation process took the form of Coordinating Board meetings. This official forum consisted of 13 members, six from the government and seven from outside of the government.[3] The six government agency representatives included the Secretary of State (as Head of the Government Office) and five secretary generals from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications. Two nongovernmental member seats were reserved for the Estonian Trade Union Confederation and the Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The other five members were civil society representatives from the E-Governance Academy, the Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations, the Open Estonia Foundation, the PRAXIS Centre for Policy Studies, and the Estonian Cooperation Assembly.

The Coordinating Board was responsible for coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating the action plan's implementation as well as making recommendations and decisions regarding the partnership. Although the board met regularly for a total of nine times during the two-year action plan period, attendance was not consistent. For example, based on the attendance sheets, the Ministry of Interior attended all meetings, but the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications attended only three meetings. The Secretary Generals were often replaced by lower-level civil servants. On the nongovernmental side, two of the seven representatives took part in all meetings, while the Estonian Trade Union Confederation and the Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in total missed six meetings.[4]

The OGP Civil Society Roundtable (CSR), a group of voluntary civil society activists, was an important partner of the Coordinating Board. The CSR gave significant input into developing the action plan and drew constant attention to open government issues inside and outside of the action plan framework.

Table 2: Action Plan Consultation Process

Phase of Action Plan	OGP Process Requirement (Articles of Governance Section)	Did the Government Meet this Requirement?
During Implementation	Regular forum for consultation during implementation?	Yes
	Consultations: Open or Invitation-only	Open
	Consultations on IAP2 spectrum[5]	Involve

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[1] Kristiina Tiimus, "Eesti on Kaasanud Vabaühendusi Avatud Valitsemise Partnerlusse Kõige Paremini," Riigikantselei, 1 October 2015, [Estonian] http://bit.ly/1UgYeIQ

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[2] Open Government Partnership (OGP), *Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) Progress Report 2014-2015: Estonia* by Kristiina Tõnnisson (Report, Washington, D.C.), 19-20, http://bit.ly/2dFNIHX

[3] In March 2016, the Association of Estonian Cities joined as the 14th member on the Board.

[4] "Koosolekute Kokkuvõtted: 4.11.2014; 6.01.2015; 24.03.2015; 2.06.2015; 8.09.2015; 8.12.2015; 1.03.2016; 27.04.2016; 1.06.2016, 21.09.2016," Avatud Valitsemise Partnerlus, Riigikantselei, http://bit.ly/25nmKM4

[5] International Association for Public Participation, "IAP2 Spectrum," http://bit.ly/2iG8ixD

Progress in commitment implementation

All the indicators and method used in the IRM research can be found in the IRM Procedures Manual, available at (http://www.opengovpartnership.org/about/about-irm). One measure deserves further explanation due to its particular interest for readers and usefulness for encouraging a race to the top between OGP-participating countries: the "starred commitment" (✪). Starred commitments are considered exemplary OGP commitments. To receive a star, a commitment must meet several criteria:

1. It must be specific enough that a judgment can be made about its potential impact. Starred commitments will have "medium" or "high" specificity.

2. The commitment's language should make clear its relevance to opening government. Specifically, it must relate to at least one of the OGP values of access to information, civic participation, or public accountability.

3. The commitment would have a "transformative" potential impact if completely implemented.

4. Finally, the commitment must see significant progress during the action plan implementation period, receiving a ranking of "substantial" or "complete" implementation.

Based on these criteria, at the midterm report, Estonia's action plan did not contain any starred commitments. After two years of implementation, the plan remains without starred commitments.

Commitments assessed as star commitments in the midterm report can lose their starred status if at the end of the action plan implementation cycle, their completion falls short of substantial or full completion, which would mean they have an overall limited completion at the end of term, per commitment language.

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

About "Did it open government?"

Often, OGP commitments are worded vaguely or not clearly related to opening government, but they actually achieve significant political reforms. Other times, commitments with significant progress may appear relevant and ambitious, but fail to open government. To capture these subtleties and, more importantly, actual changes in government practice, the IRM introduced a new variable, "Did it open government?", in end-of-term reports. This variable attempts to move beyond measuring outputs and deliverables to looking at how the government practice has changed as a result of the commitment's implementation. This can be contrasted to the IRM's "Starred commitments" which describe *potential* impact.

IRM researchers assess the variable "Did it open government?" for each of the OGP values relevant to a commitment. It asks, did it stretch the government practice beyond business as usual? The scale for assessment is as follows:

- **Worsened:** worsens government openness as a result of the measures taken by the commitment.

- **Did not change:** did not change status quo of government practice.

- **Marginal:** some change, but minor in terms of its impact over level of openness.

- **Major:** a step forward for government openness in the relevant policy area, but remains limited in scope or scale.

- **Outstanding:** a reform that has transformed "business as usual" in the relevant policy area by opening government.

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

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

General overview of commitments

As part of OGP, countries are required to make commitments in a two-year action plan. End of term reports assess an additional metric, "Did it open government?" The tables below summarize the completion level at the end of term and progress on this metric. For commitments that were complete at the midterm, the report provides a summary of progress report findings but focuses on analysis of the "Did it open government?" variable. For further details on previously completed commitments, please see the Estonia IRM midterm progress report.

Estonia's second action plan contains 23 activities grouped into six categories, focusing on open public policymaking, transparent state budget, and citizen-centered public services. In the midterm report, the 23 commitments were divided into 11 thematic areas based on their similar purpose and common theme. The same structure is used for this end of term report. As a result, both IRM reports are structured differently from Estonia's official OGP action plan.

Table 3: Overview: Assessment of Progress by Commitment

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)					Potential Impact				Completion				Midterm / End of Term	Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	None	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed		Worsens	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
1. TRANSPARENCY OF POLICYMAKING PROCESS																							
1.1. Visualization of the policymaking process		✔				✔	✔				✔						✔	Midterm			✔		
																	✔	End of Term					
1.2. Upgrading participation channels		✔				✔	✔		✔		✔					✔		Midterm			✔		
																✔		End of Term					
1.3. Improving government websites		✔				✔	✔		✔		✔				✔			Midterm			✔		
																	✔	End of Term					
2.1. Early notice on policymaking processes			✔			✔	✔					✔			✔			Midterm			✔		
																✔		End of Term					
2. STANDARD FOR INFORMATION REQUESTS																							
1.4. Standard for information requests			✔			✔		✔			✔					✔		Midterm			✔		
																	✔	End of Term					

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)					Potential Impact				Completion				Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	None	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsens	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
3. EARLY ACCESS TO TAX POLICY DECISIONS																						
2.3. Early access to tax policy decisions			✔		✔	✔	✔				✔						✔			✔		
(End of Term)																	✔					
4. ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF GOVERNMENT-LED PARTICIPATION PROCESSES																						
2.2. Participation in early stage policymaking		✔					✔				✔					✔				✔		
(End of Term)																✔						
2.4. Better feedback mechanisms	✔						✔				✔					✔				✔		
(End of Term)																✔						
3.1. Civil servant guidelines for participation		✔					✔				✔				✔				✔			
(End of Term)															✔							
5. CAPACITY-BUILDING SUPPORT FOR NONGOVERNMENTAL PARTNERS IN POLICYMAKING																						
2.5. Selecting and funding participation projects			✔				✔					✔				✔			✔			
(End of Term)																✔						
3.2. Training CSOs		✔					✔					✔				✔				✔		
(End of Term)																✔						
6. WEB TOOL FOR PETITIONS TO PARLIAMENT																						
2.6. Web tool for petitions to the Parliament and municipalities			✔				✔	✔				✔				✔						✔
(End of Term)																	✔					
7. UPGRADING GOVERNMENT PORTAL FOR OPEN SPENDING/BUDGET TRANSPARENCY																						

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)					Potential Impact				Completion			Midterm / End of Term	Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	None	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsens	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
4.1. Central government transactions				✔		✔		✔	✔			✔				✔				✔		
																	✔					
4.2. Local authorities' transactions with private entities			✔			✔		✔	✔			✔				✔			✔			
																✔						
4.3. Public spending for nonprofits				✔		✔		✔	✔			✔			✔				✔			
															✔							

8. GUIDELINES FOR CITIZEN BUDGETING

Commitment Overview	None	Low	Medium	High	None	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsens	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
4.4. Guidelines for citizen budgeting			✔			✔					✔						✔			✔		
																	✔					

9. CITIZEN-CENTERED PUBLIC SERVICES

Commitment Overview	None	Low	Medium	High	None	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsens	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
5.1. Guidelines for redesigning public services			✔			✔			✔		✔					✔			✔			
																✔						
5.2 Registry of public services			✔			✔			✔			✔				✔					✔	
																	✔					
5.3. User-centric public services				✔		✔					✔					✔				✔		
																	✔					

10. ACCESS TO E-SERVICES FOR NONRESIDENTS

Commitment Overview	None	Low	Medium	High	OGP Value Relevance					None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsens	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
5.4. Access to e-services for nonresidents			✔		Unclear							✔				✔			✔			
																	✔					

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)					Potential Impact				Completion				Midterm / End of Term	Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	None	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed		Worsens	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
11. ENHANCING OPEN DATA SUPPLY AND REUSE BY NONGOVERNMENTAL ACTORS																							
6.1. Open data portal			✔		✔				✔			✔					✔	Midterm			✔		
																	✔	End of Term					
6.2. Opening data			✔		✔							✔					✔	Midterm			✔		
																	✔	End of Term					
6.3. Supporting nongovernmental open data use		✔			✔	✔					✔					✔		Midterm			✔		
																	✔	End of Term					

1. Transparency of Policymaking Process

1.1 Providing a better overview of the process of public policy making and legislation, explaining and visualizing it, describing the participation opportunities

Start Date: 1 July 2014   End Date: 31 December 2014

1.2 Enhancing the user-friendliness of e-participation channels, integrating them where possible, informing potential users of the opportunities provided by e-participation channels

Start Date: 1 January 2015   End Date: 30 June 2016

1.3 Providing content for the participation section of the new Government website, standardization of participation-related information of ministries and its presentation

Start Date: 1 July 2014   End Date: 31 October 2014

2.1 Making information about the proceedings and participation opportunities accessible in an early stage of the policymaking process

Start Date: 1 October 2014   End Date: 31 December 2015

Responsible Institution(s): Government Office

Supporting Institution(s): Ministries, E-Governance Academy, Praxis, other third sector organizations, OGP Roundtable, Enterprise Pulse, interested parties

Commitment Overview		Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion				Did It Open Government?				
		None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsens	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
1.1. Visualization of the policymaking process	Midterm		✔			✔	✔				✔						✔			✔		
	End of Term																✔					
1.2. Upgrading participation channels	Midterm		✔			✔	✔		✔		✔					✔				✔		
	End of Term															✔						
1.3. Improving government websites	Midterm		✔			✔	✔		✔		✔				✔					✔		
	End of Term																✔					
2.1. Early notice on policymaking processes	Midterm			✔		✔	✔					✔			✔					✔		
	End of Term																✔					

Commitment aim

The thematic area "Transparency of policymaking process" aimed to give a better and more accessible overview of policymaking processes (commitments 1.1 and 2.1) and to improve e-channels for participation (commitments 1.2 and 1.3). At the time these commitments were adopted, the government acknowledged that there were "few public consultations" and "little traffic" on e-participation channels, which were "technically outdated"[1]. The aim of these commitments was to improve the accessibility of information about the government's plans while focusing on availability (2.1), relevance (1.3, 2.1), and user-friendliness (1.1, 1.2) of information.

The first activity (1.1) aimed to provide a better overview of the process of public policymaking and legislation, including explaining it, visualizing it, and describing opportunities for participation. The second activity (1.2) aimed to enhance the user-friendliness of e-participation channels, integrating them where possible and informing potential users of the opportunities provided by e-participation channels. The third activity (1.3) aimed to standardize the ways in which participation-related activities are presented on the webpages of all ministries. It also aimed to provide links from the government's general site to the webpages of all separate ministries with a new subsection titled "participation." The fourth activity (2.1) aimed to make the information about the proceedings and participation opportunities accessible at an early stage of the policymaking process. To achieve this goal, the government looked to make information available about when and where important decisions were made. The government also wanted to make available documents relevant to making and explaining decisions.

Status

Commitment 1.1

Midterm: Complete

Standardized information about participation opportunities and channels was made available on ministry webpages. The information about participation was updated and modernized. Most ministries (except for the Ministry of Finance) had a standardized participation section on their front page with links to *osale.ee* and *eelnoud.valitsus.ee*. The visualization of policymaking and the legislative process also were made available on the Government Office's webpage.[2] However, the government did not publicize the outcomes.

End of term: Complete

An overview of public policymaking, legislation, and participation opportunities was completed by the midterm review. But, by the end of the action plan, the IRM researcher did not find evidence of the government informing the public of the changes on the government websites.

Commitment 1.2

Midterm: Substantial

The activity aimed to map problems with existing e-participation channels such as too few public consultations, insufficient feedback from the public, and lack of technical updates. As part of the commitment, Estonian think tank Praxis completed a report with specific recommendations on improving channels for participation.[3] However, the government had not implemented the recommendations. Thus, the IRM researcher found the level of completion of this activity to be substantial.

End of term: Substantial

Based on the findings of the PRAXIS report completed by the midterm review, the Coordinating Board concluded that the Draft Act Information System (EIS) was the preferred method for civic participation. As a result, the Coordinating Board decided that the government should further develop this system to fulfill its OGP commitments (in particular to fulfill commitments 1.2, 2.1, and 2.4). As part of this commitment, the government improved the user-friendliness of the EIS by better presenting and grouping data on the site, and revamping the help section for users.

According to civil society stakeholders, the EIS has not been enhanced or integrated as much as was recommended by the Praxis report or as much as was first discussed in the Coordinating Board because of a lack of finances.[4] The government agrees that a total makeover of the system exceeded available resources, but argues that this was never the intent of the commitment. Ultimately, the completion of the commitment remains substantial because the commitment text was not specific enough to be able to conclude that it has been fully implemented. Moreover, the most visible changes to the EIS took place in October 2016—outside of the dates of the action plan.

Commitment 1.3

Midterm: Limited

By the midterm report, ministries had developed and agreed upon the form and structure of the participation section of the government website. However, the development of technical solutions and the promotion of the expected "participation" subsections were pending. The ministries did not have standardized sections on "participation," and the general webpage of the Government Office did not have an updated "participation" section.

End of term: Complete

The ministries and the Government Office updated their websites to include standardized participation sections with general participation-related information such as how the decision-making process works, where citizens can learn more, and how they can become involved.[5] The commitment is considered complete because the government created online participation sections that follow a similar framework. However, the government could make other changes suggested by the Praxis report, such as increasing awareness of participation channels, improving monitoring activities, and making channels more user-friendly.

Commitment 2.1

Midterm: Limited

Ministries were expected to enhance civic participation by informing potential stakeholders of important initiatives at an early stage of the policymaking process. By the midterm report, different stakeholders discussed what could and should be implemented to enhance participation opportunities early in the process. Various stakeholders' proposed solutions were approved, but the Government Office still needed to find funding for the proposed solutions, particularly concerning the participation portal (eelnoud.valitsus.ee). The IRM researcher found the level of completion of this activity to be limited because enhancements that were planned and agreed upon had not been funded or implemented.

End of term: Substantial

This commitment followed its time frame and now annual ministerial work plans are publically available. It is also possible to participate in public consultations in both participation portals (osale.ee and eelnoud.valitsus.ee). In addition, in October 2016—after the conclusion of the period of the action plan—the government created a new feature on the EIS that issues early notices to citizens when the government is beginning to prepare a draft law. Given that the commitment was defined vaguely and did not establish clearly measurable activities, it is not possible to conclude that it is fully completed. On this point, CSO representatives on the Coordinating Board said that suitable activities were not clearly defined or agreed upon during the plan's implementation. According to one of the CSO representatives, this commitment "is very characteristic of the whole action plan. A good goal is stated, but no concrete activities are listed to reach it. Often this aspect has been left open based on the thinking that *we [government officials] will find suitable activities during the implementation period'* but the reality is that this has not happened. We cannot assess the commitment if no activities or indicators were stated."[6] According to the government, the OGP Coordinating Board spent a year discussing which activities would be carried out for each commitment and agreed on concrete deliverables. In the view of the IRM researcher, the Coordinating Board did try to establish concrete activities for each commitment, but this should have occurred prior to the action plan to preserve time for implementation.

Did it open government?

The starting point of these commitments was a low level of public participation in policymaking processes. According to a recent survey, 63 percent of Estonians are interested in what is happening in Estonian politics, yet only 42 percent have participated in some way.[7] The commitments aimed to help people understand their opportunities for participation in various proceedings and in more stages of policymaking. However, they focused primarily on publishing informative material on existing channels for public participation and on improving the EIS. As mentioned previously, this decision was taken because the Praxis report revealed that the EIS was the preferred channel for public participation. As a result, the Coordinating Board decided that the government should focus improvements on that portal.

In general, the participation channels are still underused because available channels are not disseminated and people lack awareness of them. Also, online information is not updated, and government websites have limited user-friendliness which, according to the National Audit Office of Estonia, "are not uniformly simple and user-friendly, or sources of added value."[8] CSOs claim that the commitments were useful exercises for civil servants but did not improve much for the end users.[9] All activities took place, to a certain degree, but information still lacks availability, relevance, and user-friendliness. To the end users, most of the implemented activities could be classified as regular updates of the webpages. According to a CSO representative from the Coordinating Board, "Most of these activities were formally implemented, but their actual goal—to increase public participation in policy-making—has not been achieved." The Executive Director of the Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations (NENO) further acknowledged that "the improvements made have not convinced or proved to CSOs that the possibilities for active participation in policy-making process have broadened".[10] As a result, the influence of these commitments on access to information and civic participation is marginal.

Commitment 1.1

Access to information: Marginal

Civic participation: Marginal

Commitment 1.1 provided an overview of the policymaking and legislative process, and described participation opportunities. But it did not establish or improve channels for participation. Furthermore, new information has not been disseminated sufficiently. For example, members of the OGP Coordinating Board were not aware of the outcomes and did not manage to find the right sub-page online to access the information. Though the government did later make the sub-page easier to find, the commitment had an informational focus and therefore opened up the government in a marginal way.

Commitment 1.2

Access to information: Marginal

Civic participation: Marginal

According to its text, this commitment aimed to "enhance the user-friendliness of e-participation channels." Results included updated proposals and help sections on the participation portals and a report with recommendations on enhancing e-participation.[11] Following broad suggestions from the PRAXIS report, the OGP Coordinating Board decided that the EIS, in particular, should be developed further. Both the functionality and user-friendliness of the system have increased, but these updates have not generated higher levels of public participation. For example, it is still not possible to generate public discussions on the site. According to a member of the Coordinating Board, the functionality and user-friendliness of the EIS have certainly improved, but there is still no possibility to generate a real discussion and the government has not done much to inform potential users about the system.[12] Given these findings, the commitment marginally improved access to information and civic participation.

Commitment 1.3

Access to information: Marginal

Civic participation: Marginal

Commitment 1.3 created specific participation sections on each ministry website for citizens to understand their opportunities for involvement. However, according to CSO stakeholders, there is a lack of communication and awareness of the new participation sections.[13] In addition, the sections are hard to find, lack regular updates, and contain overly general information about participation processes. As such, the commitment is considered to have opened the government in a marginal way.

Commitment 2.1

Access to information: Marginal

Civic participation: Marginal

According to the text of the action plan, this commitment aimed to make information about "proceedings and participation opportunities accessible in an early stage of the policymaking process." The results included publishing annual ministerial work plans and making participation on the EIS easier and more accessible by enabling early notices for citizens when draft preparations begin. Although the work plans help the public understand when important decisions are made, there is no new information about specific avenues for participation. Moreover, the publication of the work plans does not ensure that citizens will be able to influence decision making. As for the new features on the EIS, there is very little traffic on early notices about the start of draft processes. According to a member of the Coordinating Board, the function of informing the public of the starting phase of preparing a draft never actually took off.[14] As of 24 January 2017, there was no information about any draft acts listed in the EIS.

Carried forward?

Parts of commitments 1.2, 1.3, and 2.1 are included in the third action plan in a general commitment to improve open and inclusive policymaking processes.

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[1] Estonia's Open Government Partnership Mid-Term Progress Report, [Estonian] https://riigikantselei.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/Failid/AVP/avp_2014-2016_tegevuskava_taitmise_vahearuanne.pdf (accessed 16.11.2016)

[2] "Poliitikakujundamise Ja Oigusloome Protsess [Visualization of Policymaking and Legislative Process]," Riigikantselei, [Estonian] http://bit.ly/1Rluzs1

[3] Praxis Center for Policy Studies and Pulse, *Osalusveebi Ja Valitsuse Eelnõude Infosüsteemi Kasutatavuse Analüüs* by Hille Hinsberg (Report, April 2015), [Estonian] http://bit.ly/22wiqek

[4] Civil society organization (CSO) stakeholders, interview with the IRM researcher, Tallinn, 26 August 2016.

[5] "Kaasamine ja Osalemine [Civic Engagement]," Vabariigi Valitsus [Government Office], [Estonian] https://valitsus.ee/et/kaasamine-ja-osalemine

[6] Comments made to IRM researcher during interview with CSO stakeholders, 26 August 2016.

[7] "Kodakondsus, Poliitiline Enesemäärang ja Osalemine," Kultuuriministeerium, 2, http://bit.ly/2ihb5dC

[8] Toomas Mattson, "User-Friendliness of Public E-Services Needs More Attention," News, National Audit Office of Estonia, 12 October 2016, http://bit.ly/2icjhjh

[9] IRM Progress Report 2014-2015: Estonia, 29, http://bit.ly/2dFNIHX

[10] Mrs. Maris Jõgeva (Executive Director, Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations, NENO), interview with IRM researcher.

[11] CSO stakeholders, interview, August 2016.

[12] Mrs. Liia Hänni (member of the Coordinating Board), interview with IRM researcher.

[13] CSO stakeholders, interview, August 2016.

[14] Mrs. Maris Jõgeva (Executive Director, Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations, NENO), interview with IRM researcher.

2. Standard for Information Requests

1.4 Developing a unified form for the submission of memoranda, explanation requests and information requests of the citizens to public authorities through the eesti.ee portal.

Start Date: 1 July 2014   End Date: 30 January 2016

Responsible Institution(s): Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications

Supporting Institution(s): The State Information System Authority (eesti.ee), Data Protection Inspectorate (owner of the form to be created), public sector institutions (form users), citizens, and entrepreneurs (form testers)

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

Commitment aim

The main purposes of this activity were to improve access to information and to enhance the usability of the www.eesti.ee portal. Given the many critiques about functionality and usability of the portal, the government aimed to improve the common "gateway" for information. See the 2014-2015 IRM Estonian progress report for a discussion of the various limitations of the www.eesti.ee portal.[1] Specifically, the commitment aimed to harmonize different e-forms and develop a unified form for the submission of memoranda and citizen information requests to public authorities.

Status

Midterm: Substantial

By the midterm report, the government completed the first and second stages of this commitment—an initial analysis and the development of a report with proposals—in accordance with the established time frame. Officials still were working on the third stage, which involved applying additional changes suggested by the State Information System Authority and public sector institutions. Therefore, the standard for information requests was not completed.

End of term: Complete

The third stage of the commitment has been completed. The e-forms of the eesti.ee portal have been integrated and standardized. They now include 650 different institutions, which make up 80 percent of all public institutions in Estonia (including ministries, administrations and boards, county governments, inspections, and local governments).[2]

Given that joining the system was voluntary, some smaller public institutions that do not have the latest versions of security protection or interfaces have not joined. However, all major public institutions are included. Citizens can edit and send information requests to state authorities in a standard format from one section of the portal.[3] Instead of the previous 14 different e-forms, there is now one form to contact all the public institutions on the portal.

Did it open government?

Access to information: Marginal

At the outset of the commitment, the development of e-services had been on standby for several years. E-forms were inefficient and spread out between different institutions and portals. The commitment aimed to increase the user-friendliness of e-forms and to improve citizen access to information requests. There are now in total 380 unified and standardized e-forms available on the state portal.

However, there are no public statistics on their actual usage,[4] and problems remain. For example, the portal has an outdated development frame that is not easy to use. According to PricewaterhouseCoopers, the database system is outdated and lacks more modern technology that would improve functionality for end users.[5] There is also low public awareness of the available e-forms as evidenced by the fact that most of the CSOs the IRM researcher consulted were not aware of this activity. Lastly, the portal lacks feedback mechanisms. There are no tracking options for the usage of e-forms, and citizens are unaware of how their e-form requests are processed after they have been submitted. CSOs and some public administrators agreed that this was a low-impact commitment that resolved minor technical issues and did not offer much additional value.[6] Ultimately, it simplified the process for information requests, but opened government in only a marginal way.

Carried forward?

The commitment was completed and will not be carried forward in the new action plan.

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[1] *IRM Progress Report 2014-2015: Estonia*, 32, http://bit.ly/2dFNIHX
[2] CSO stakeholders, interview, August 2016.
[3] "Köik Vormid," E-teenused, EESTI.ee, [Estonian] http://bit.ly/2hWQyP9
[4] "Haaslava Vallavalitsus," Köik Vormid, E-teenused, EESTI.ee, [Estonian] http://bit.ly/2i2xkop
[5] PricewaterhouseCoopers Advisors, *E-Vormide Analüüs, Ühtlustatud Mudel Ja Parendus-ettepanekud: Lõpparuanne* (Report, Tallinn, 2015), 27-29, [Estonian] http://bit.ly/1T8HeDq
[6] IRM Progress Report 2014-2015: Estonia, 32, http://bit.ly/2dFNIHX

3. Early Access to Tax Policy Decisions

2.3 It is recommended that important budgeting and taxation policy decisions be made in spring, together with the Budget Strategy

Start Date: 1 July 2014   End Date: 30 June 2016

Responsible Institution(s): Ministry of Finance

Supporting Institution(s): Tax and Customs Board, ministries

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

Commitment aim

Previously, public participation in tax policy decisions was low, and the public was informed of changes only when they came into force. The commitment's activities sought to make citizens more aware of the possible effects of taxation decisions by giving them six months between the decision-making date and the date when the decision comes into force.

Status

Midterm: Complete

The Estonian Parliament adopted an updated Taxation Act that requires at least six months between changes to any Act that regulates taxation and enforcement of the changes.[1] Therefore, the commitment was completed by the publication of the midterm evaluation report.

Did it open government?

Access to information: Marginal

Civic participation: Marginal

Public accountability: Did not change

Previously, the tax policy in Estonia did not have sufficient public participation, and the stakeholders were not involved actively in making tax policy proposals. In particular, the business sector and its associations expressed dissatisfaction with informing the public of tax policy changes only as the changes were about to come into force, when it was too late for citizens to have a substantive impact on the outcome.[2] As a result, the commitment set out to allow more time to adjust to tax policy decisions and to improve transparency of state finances.

As a consequence of the updated Taxation Act, access to information improved. Instead of learning about taxation policy changes when they are about to be implemented, citizens now receive notifications of these changes six months before they apply.

In terms of civic participation, this new information gives citizens an opportunity to learn about current proposals, to offer their feedback and comments, and to influence policy outcomes. However, the commitment made only marginal progress in civic participation because the State Budget Act, the object of tax reforms, still is not conducive for public engagement. The State Budget Act follows the internal logic of public sector financial and fiscal principles and, as a result, lacks clear language, readability, and usability by citizens.[3] For this commitment to improve civic participation significantly, taxation proposals and regulations need to be readable and understandable, in addition to being available six months before implementation.

As for public accountability, given that the commitment did not lead to an improved or new channel through which citizens can provide feedback and government officials can respond to criticism, there has not been a change in the status quo. Although the commitment created a window of six months before tax decisions come into effect, further efforts are needed to establish concrete participatory activities—particularly in the business sector—in discussions involving the budget strategy.

Carried forward?

The commitment was completed and will not be carried forward in the new action plan.

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[1] Riigi Teataja, Taxation Act, §41, Government of Estonia, 1 July 2015, http://bit.ly/1Uf5Ewi
[2] IRM Progress Report 2014-2015: Estonia, 34, http://bit.ly/2dFNIHX
[3] IRM Progress Report 2014-2015: Estonia, 35, http://bit.ly/2dFNIHX

4. Enhancing the Quality of Government-Led Participation Processes

2.2: Promoting of initiatives that would enable discussion about principal policy choices in an early stage of the policymaking process

Start Date: 1 March 2015   End Date: 30 June 2016

2.4: Introducing to government institutions various possibilities and methods of feedback in order to achieve better results in policymaking, their implementation

Start Date: 1 December 2014   End Date: 30 June 2016

3.1 Creating guidelines for making participation methods and best practices more readily available for those who carry out processes, in accordance with policymaking situations (e.g. an interactive website with examples and methods)

Start Date: 1 October 2014   End Date: 30 June 2016

Responsible Institution(s): Government Office

Supporting Institution(s): Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior, other ministries, nongovernmental organizations, other stakeholders

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion / End of Term				Did It Open government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsens	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
2.2. Participation in early stage policymaking (Midterm)		✔				✔				✔					✔				✔		
2.2. (End of Term)															✔						
2.4. Better feedback mechanisms (Midterm)	✔					✔				✔					✔				✔		
2.4. (End of Term)															✔						
3.1. Civil servant guidelines for participation (Midterm)		✔				✔				✔				✔					✔		
3.1. (End of Term)															✔						

Commitment aim

This thematic area is aiming to strengthen the policymaking process in early stages (2.2), to introduce feedback opportunities for policymaking processes (2.4) and to support civil servants who are not familiar with active policymaking processes (3.1). The commitments under this thematic area set out to create guidelines on how civil servants and citizens can participate, and to improve the Draft Act Information System (EIS).

The first commitment (2.2) of the thematic area aimed to strengthen the overall policymaking process (especially in earlier stages) and to involve more participants in policy discussions. According to the action plan, the focus of the commitment was on increasing conceptual documents about certain policy areas (green and white papers) to raise awareness and to improve the accessibility and usability of policy information. The second commitment (2.4) aimed to introduce feedback during policymaking processes for participants on how their comments were taken into account or why they were rejected. The main focus and the core action of the activity was adding notifications and feedback on citizen input to the EIS. The third commitment (3.1) aimed to support civil servants who are not extensively experienced with policymaking, but who have an active role in policymaking. The main purpose of the activity was to share administrator experiences with less experienced administrators. The activity sought to create guidelines for participation methods and to make best practices more available for policymakers.

Status

Commitment 2.2

Midterm: Substantial

According to the midterm report, this commitment was substantially completed. A number of improvements were made. For example, ministries began publishing annual institutional action plans and presenting them at public events. Also, various training courses and seminars on how to involve stakeholders were offered for civil servants.

End of term: Substantial

In addition to the trainings and publication of annual action plans, the government carried out other informational activities. For example, the Government Office webpage has a section that illustrates the process of policymaking and participation opportunities in early stages.[1] However, because the text of the action plan is vague and does not specify an expected final outcome, it is not possible to determine that this commitment has been fully completed. As a result, it is considered substantially complete.

Commitment 2.4

Midterm: Substantial

By the midterm report, stakeholders had held various discussions to identify ways to improve feedback to citizens through the EIS. The Government Office was looking for funding opportunities for subsequent activities.

End of term: Substantial

Since the midterm report, there have been further discussions, and there is now an option on the EIS to add public consultation summaries to draft acts. This allows the government to give feedback to stakeholders on their suggestions during consultations. Due to the vagueness of the commitment text and given that the government's ideas and aims seem to have changed during the implementation period, it is not clear what the commitment intended to accomplish. As a result, completion is considered to have remained substantial.

Commitment 3.1

Midterm: Limited

The completion of this commitment was limited because the plan to develop a toolbox with participation methods and best practices was abandoned. The Coordinating Board decided that the government should no longer make a new webpage for the activity because it would demand too many resources. The government and nongovernmental organizations discussed other ways of promoting best practices, but they were pending.

End of term: Limited

At the moment, the completion of this commitment is limited because the initial plan of creating a toolbox was postponed and participation practices were not renewed.[2] This commitment will be continued in the new action plan.

Did it open government?

Before implementation of these commitments, civic participation in the policymaking process was low. According to a recent survey, only 42 percent of Estonian citizens participate in politics, and 70 percent of citizens do not belong to any nongovernmental organization.[3] As a result, this group of commitments aimed to strengthen civic participation and feedback during the policymaking process. Although many activities were completed, in March 2016, government and civil society representatives met to discuss different problems related to civic participation practices concerning this thematic area's commitments. For example, the link between the state and civil society partners during policymaking still is confusing, and civic participation is usually only possible after important decisions have been made.[4]

Commitment 2.2

Civic participation: Marginal

As part of Commitment 2.2, the government held participation trainings for civil servants, all ministries published institutional action plans, and the Government Office released information on opportunities for participation in the early part of the policymaking process. Although these are positive steps, this commitment had only a marginal effect on civic participation because it is unclear how many people benefited from the trainings, the implementation of participation procedures is still lacking,[5] and current procedures are hard to follow and are not well-advertised. Moreover, according to the CSOs participating in the OGP Roundtable, citizens lack information about how to be involved.[6]

Commitment 2.4

Civic participation: Marginal

This commitment resulted in the possibility of submitting public consultation summaries to draft files on the EIS. As of 24 October 2016, one draft act open for public consultation was the government's final self-assessment report.[7] This is a positive step forward for civic participation but is limited in scope and does not address the limited public awareness of participation opportunities or the unclear procedures.[8]

Commitment 3.1

Civic participation: Did not change

The government is sharing best practices in civic engagement through various networks such as the Government and Civil Society Joint Committee. However, the goal specified in the commitment text—the creation of guidelines and best practices, such as through an interactive website—was not completed. CSO representatives from the OGP Roundtable agreed that the planned commitment was not realistic or reasonable. Given the lack of progress in implementation, there was no change in the status quo.

Carried forward?

In Estonia's third action plan, commitment 3.1 of this thematic area is carried forward in a new commitment called "Increase Engagement and Transparency in Policymaking" under activity 2.3 on "More Open and Transparent Lawmaking." Activity 2.3 seeks to engage interest groups to participate in the lawmaking process according to the new parliamentary rules of procedure.[9] The other two commitments were not carried forward directly.

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[1] "Poliitikakujundamise Ja Õigusloome Protsess," Riigikantselei, [Estonian] http://bit.ly/1Rluzs1
[2] "Osalusveebis Saad," Osale.ee, [Estonian] https://www.osale.ee/?id=20
[3] "Kodakondsus, Poliitiline Enesemäärang Ja Osalemine," Kultuuriministeerium, 2, [Estonian] http://bit.ly/2ihb5dC
[4] Maris Jõgeva, "Leia 10 Erinevust: Kaasamise Hea Tava Ja Teglikkus," Article, Hea Kodanik, 7 March 2016, [Estonian] http://bit.ly/2hbAK9V
[5] IRM Progress Report 2014-2015: Estonia, 37, http://bit.ly/2dFNIHX
[6] CSO stakeholders, interview, August 2016.
[7] "Avaleht," Eelnõude Infosüsteem, [Estonian] http://eelnoud.valitsus.ee/main#O0dHGsg5
[8] CSO stakeholders, interview, August 2016; Kalle Pilt, "Jookse-Viska Demokraatia. Time-out!," EPL Delfi, EestiPäevaleht, 27 February 2016, [Estonian] http://bit.ly/2hV0zJX
[9] OGP, *Estonia's Open Government Partnership Action Plan for 2016-2018* by the Government of Estonia (Report, Tallinn, 2016), 16-20, http://bit.ly/2hbF8FO

5. Capacity-Building Support for Nongovernmental Partners in Policymaking

2.5: Providing content for participation projects financed by European Union structural funds and implementation of these projects in cooperation with third sector organizations

Start Date: 1 June 2014   End Date: 30 June 2016

3.2: Increasing the ability of social partners and other third sector organizations to better analyse public policies and to include their member organizations in the formation of positions regarding public policies

Start Date: 1 October 2014   End Date: 30 June 2016

Responsible Institution(s): Government Office, Ministry of the Interior (issues related to strategic partnership)

Supporting institution(s): Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior, Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations, other government authorities, and civil society organizations (CSOs)

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion				Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsens	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
2.5. Selecting and funding participation projects			✔			✔					✔				✔			✔			
															✔						
3.2. Training CSOs		✔				✔					✔				✔				✔		
															✔						

Commitment aim

This activity area aimed to increase participation in the policymaking process and to include third sector organizations in the process. As part of commitment 2.5, the Government Office earmarked financial support for three kinds of activities for 2015-2020: (1) testing new participation solutions; (2) developing government participation solutions; and, (3) building capacity of nongovernmental partners in policymaking. With 440,000 euros, the Government Office planned to support seven projects that would enhance participation practices in Estonia, which equates to approximately 60,000 euros per project. Commitment 3.2 aimed to build the capacity of nongovernmental partners through programs for NGOs, the Estonian Trade Union Confederation, and the Estonian Employers' Association.

Status

Commitment 2.5

Midterm: Substantial

By the end of the first year of implementation, the government designed funding measures for projects, and one out of seven projects received funding.[1] According to the midterm report, the commitment was progressing according to schedule.

End of term: Substantial

At the time of writing, the government had launched three participation projects on testing new methods of civic engagement, developing the national policy on engagement, and building the capacity of NGOs to participate in policy-making. The first two projects were launched during the implementation period. The third—a 2-year development program for supporting CSO advocacy activities—was launched after the end of the action plan. The projects were selected by a Projects Selection Advisory Committee, which included both government and nongovernmental representatives.

Commitment 3.2

Midterm: Substantial

The leadership development program was completed, and the government conducted 11 trainings for 30 participants on issues such as strategic management, personnel management, impact evaluation, cooperation, coordination, communication, policy development, and the role of managers in nongovernmental organizations. The Ministry of Interior was working on the integration of strategic partnerships between nongovernmental partners and public institutions.

End of term: Substantial

Following the first leadership development program, the government launched another 2-year incubatory support program after the end of the action plan (the contract was signed in August 2016). This commitment was under discussion in March 2016 in an advisory commission for participation commitments. Participants pointed out that the development program should be a long-term support package that includes learning practical and theoretical skills, as well as provides supporting and advisory opportunities for nongovernmental partners.[2] The government published the tender on 18 May 2016. The consortium of the Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations (NENO) and Praxis won the bid. However, given that only one of the two programs was implemented during the period of the action plan, the completion of the commitment is substantial.

Did it open government?

Before these commitments, public participation and third sector involvement in public policymaking was lacking. According to the Good Governance Program, there was a lack of feedback mechanisms and proper legal regulations to make citizens' voices heard.[3] Moreover, People's Assembly, a website that collects public proposals, showed that 95 percent of participants were not satisfied with the feedback received after submitting proposals to the state.[4] Therefore, these two commitments aimed to build the capacity of CSOs to participate actively in the policymaking process.

Commitment 2.5

Civic participation: Did not change

Only one participation project concerning the Draft Act Information System (EIS) was implemented as a result of this commitment.[5] The EIS website was made more user-friendly, but there are no public statistics on usage, and the government has not advertised the activities to improve usage. Furthermore, the lack of clarity on framework, rules, and expectations influenced the relationship between CSOs and the Government Office negatively.

For example, there was a considerable lack of common understanding about the purpose of the participation projects and the criteria used to select them. Though the selection criteria were stated in a State Secretary decree,[6] they did not provide a strategic picture of how projects could or should improve public participation, according to the Executive Director of NENO.

In addition, there was confusion about what constituted a "submitted idea". An advisory committee was formed with CSO and government representatives to review the submitted proposals and develop project ideas. However, since there was no concrete format or requirements for presenting project proposals, there were varying interpretations of suitable project ideas. For example, according to NENO, an idea prepared together with the Ministry of Internal Affairs did not receive any official feedback.

According to the government, some misunderstandings during the process were due to incorrect expectations that funding would not need to be disbursed through procurement and would instead be automatically assigned to submitted ideas. CSO members of the Coordinating Board acknowledged that the financing and implementation process of the projects was not clear. Ultimately, because clear guidelines and rules were missing, the commitment created a great deal of frustration among CSOs. Given this context and the lack of substantive improvements in opportunities for citizens to participate in decision-making, the IRM researcher considers that this commitment did not change the status quo.

Commitment 3.2

Civic participation: Marginal

During the period of the action plan, the government implemented one leadership training for both civil servants and members of nongovernmental organizations. Preparations for another 2-year incubatory support program began in 2016, but the program was launched after the end of the action plan in August 2016. Although the leadership program is a positive step for civic participation and received positive evaluations from participants and trainers, more sustained programs are needed in the future.[7]

Carried forward?

This thematic area's commitments are carried forward directly in the next action plan under a new commitment called, "Increase Engagement and Transparency in Policymaking" as activity "2.4 Increase of the Engagement Capacity of State Authorities and Participation Capacity of Nongovernmental Organizations in Policymaking." It aims to improve the quality of policymaking and assumes that the government already established the necessary conditions for more systematic engagement.[8]

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[1] Riigikantselei, *Eesti Tegevuskava Avatud Valitsemise Partnerluses Osalemisel 2014-2016: Tegevuskava Täitmise Vahearuanne* (Report, Talllinn [sic], 2015), 19, [Estonian] http://bit.ly/1Mml9Qe
[2] Riigikantselei, *Kaasamisalaste Tegevuste Valikut Nõustav Komisjon* (Report, Tallinn, 9 March 2016), 2, [Estonian] http://bit.ly/2i2ENUr
[3] *Eesti Koostöö Kogu, Riigipidamise Kava* (Report, December 2014), 3, [Estonian] http://bit.ly/1pB3eLc
[4] IRM Progress Report 2014-2015: Estonia, 42-43, http://bit.ly/2dFNIHX
[5] Riigikantselei, *Kaasamisalaste Tegevuste Valikut Nõustav Komisjon* (Report, Tallinn, 29 January 2016), [Estonian] http://bit.ly/2hensLf
[6] Koosoleku Protokoll [Meeting Minutes], 1 January 2015, 4, [Estonian], accessed 8 October 2016, https://riigikantselei.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/Failid/AVP/avp_nr2.pdf
[7] Kaasamisalaste Tegevuste Valikut Nõustav Komisjon, 2, [Estonian] http://bit.ly/2i2ENUr
[8] Estonia's Open Government Partnership Action Plan for 2016-2018, 21, http://bit.ly/2hbF8FO

6. Web Tool for Petitions to Parliament

2.6 Creating a non-governmental web-based discussion environment to give citizens an opportunity to initiate, compile and then submit, digitally signed, collective memoranda to state and local authorities

Start Date: 1 December 2014   End Date: 28 February 2014

Editorial Note: The end date of this activity was postponed to December 2015.

Responsible Institution(s): Estonian Cooperation Assembly

Supporting Institution(s): Parliament, the Government Office, interested ministries

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm / End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsens	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
2.6. Web tool for petitions to the Parliament and municipalities			✔			✔		✔			✔				✔	✔				✔	

Commitment aim

The commitment set out to develop a web tool that enables the public to raise issues, deliberate, develop ideas on legislative proposals, and submit citizen initiatives to the Parliament. Previously, there were somewhat similar projects and e-platforms such as osale.ee and rahvakogu.ee. However, the Estonian Cooperation Assembly, a foundation created by the President of the Republic in 2007, proposed creating a new, more user-friendly webpage for petitions that would increase discussion and enable forwarding collective proposals to the Parliament.

Status

Midterm: Substantial

The completion of this commitment by the midterm report was substantial. The Parliament adopted a new law that would allow citizens to send collective proposals to the Parliament. The Cooperation assembly began creating the webpage.

End of term: Complete

The rahvaalgatus.ee website was launched in March 2016. According to the head of the Cooperation Assembly, *Rahvaalgatus.ee* is an electronic system designed to lead discussions, submit collective appeals and complaints to the Parliament, and track their consideration.[1] The first petition sent to the Parliament received around 2,000 signatures through the website. The web-based platform collected more than 10,000 signatures during its first eight months of existence.[2] By the end of the action plan, the webpage had about 30,000 users and three petitions were sent to the Parliament.[3]

Improvements to enhance the web tool are ongoing,[4] but can be considered a part of everyday maintenance of the system. In 2017, the government plans to carry out greater awareness-raising activities to increase the diversity of initiatives and of those who submit them. The commitment is complete because the website is active, there are many users, and the first proposals were sent to the Parliament.

Did it open government?

Civic participation: Major

The main aim of this commitment was to continue a previously successful Rahvakogu pilot project. Through the project, citizens could collect petition signatures and suggest ideas to the Parliament. The new website is a major improvement in civic participation because collective appeals are now easier to sign,[5] petitions have translated to tangible results, and the initiative has been complemented by awareness-raising activities. By January 2017, the website had over 70,000 users and six petitions were sent out to the Parliament. All six petitions involved the environment and nature, including the protection of the flying squirrel population, planning of the Rail Baltic railway, and preservation of the Väike Strait ecosystems. Although the Parliament has not yet given a definitive answer on these initiatives, positive strides have been made. For example, the Ministry of Environment has extended the permanent habitat of flying squirrels.[6] Lastly, the website's development team has carried out educational campaigns targeting youth, the elderly, and Russian speakers to encourage their participation. Moving forward, additional promotional activities are needed to raise awareness and include new thematic areas and citizens in the initiative.

Carried forward?

This commitment has been completed and is not included in the new action plan.

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[1] "Is it an illusion? A participatory website allows ordinary people to participate in state government," 13 January 2017, accessed 25 January 2017, http://www.kogu.ee/en/is-it-an-illusion-a-participatory-website-allows-ordinary-people-to-participate-in-state-government/
[2] Rahvaalgatus Facebook page, accessed 25 January 2017, https://www.facebook.com/rahvaalgatus/
[3] "Discussions," Rahvaalgatus, accessed 29 August 2016, https://rahvaalgatus.ee/discussions
[4] "Rahvaalgatus.ee Juhendite Töötoa (1.06) Kokkuvõte," EestiKoostööKogu, [Estonian] http://bit.ly/2hJ5S1h
[5] "Is it an illusion? A participatory website allows ordinary people to participate in state government," 13 January 2017, accessed 25 January 2017, http://www.kogu.ee/en/is-it-an-illusion-a-participatory-website-allows-ordinary-people-to-participate-in-state-government/
[6] "News," Estonian Cooperation Assembly, accessed 25 January 2017, http://www.kogu.ee/en/news/

7. Upgrading Government Portal for Open Spending/Budget Transparency

4.1: Including the accounting data of central government, persons in public law and as many other units of the public sector as possible in the designated public finances web-based application, with a level of detail as required in the chart of accounts

Start Date: 1 September 2014   End Date: 31 December 2015

4.2 Publicizing private sector and third sector transaction partners of local authorities and interfacing this information with the business registry to show persons related to these transactions

Start Date: 1 January 2016   End Date: 31 July 2016

4.3 Including third sector organizations that have received funding from the state budget in the public finances application

Start Date: 1 September 2015   End Date: 30 June 2016

Responsible Institution(s): Ministry of Finance

Supporting Institution(s): Praxis, citizens' associations; the Ministry of Justice, the State Audit Office; the Ministry of the Interior, the Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion				Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsens	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
4.1. Central government transactions				✔	✔		✔	✔			✔				✔				✔		
																✔					
4.2. Local authorities' transactions with private entities			✔		✔		✔	✔			✔				✔			✔			
															✔						
4.3. Public spending for nonprofits				✔	✔		✔	✔			✔			✔				✔			
														✔							

Commitment aim

These commitments aim to make budget spending more transparent by making government accounting data available for all interested parties. Previously, the public finance applications did not allow nongovernmental actors or the public to search for data or to analyze it. To improve the situation, the government looked to publish the names of private and third sector transaction partners of local authorities (4.2 and 4.3) and publish additional accounting data (4.1).

Commitment 4.1 sought to make budget spending more transparent. It aimed to make available the accounting data of the central government, persons in public law, and other units of the public sector. For this activity, the government committed to updating a new web-based application called "State Finances." Commitment 4.2 focused on publicizing information about local authorities' private and third sector transaction partners such as names of organizations, allocated funds, and purposes of the funding. It also aimed to add information to the business registry to show persons related to different transactions. Commitment 4.3 and commitment 4.1 both aimed to develop the public finances application. But activity 4.3 set out to make public expenditures more transparent by releasing third sector (nongovernmental organization and foundation) funding and facilitating the public's and the public sector's open data use.

Status

Commitment 4.1

Midterm: Substantial

According to the midterm report, this commitment was substantially completed. The government developed updates to the State Finances application in 2014 and further developed it in 2015. The launch of the updated website (and completion of the commitment) was planned for the beginning of 2016.[1]

End of term: Complete

The commitment is complete. The new accounting data was published on the State Finances website in the beginning of 2016, as planned.[2] The application received significant attention with more than 8,000 visitors, of which 14 percent are from countries other than Estonia. Moreover, according to the MOF, Lithuania showed strong interest in this commitment. On 28 September 2016, the Estonian Government showcased Estonia's State Finance application in the keynote address at the White House Open Data Innovation Summit, an international open data event in the US.

Commitment 4.2

Midterm: Substantial

This commitment was expected to be completed by having the Ministry of Finance (MOF) revise a financial management law to identify the accounting data for local government units. At the time of the midterm report, this commitment was delayed because the draft act and execution of the new law were missing. Additionally, there were coordination and communication problems with local officials, and the commitment lacked funds for successful completion. The 2014-2015 IRM Estonian progress report discusses the challenges in implementing this commitment at the local level.[3]

End of term: Substantial

The publication of information about the private and third sector transaction partners of local governments on the State Finances website was deferred to the third action plan.[4] The government sought to standardize the system for all involved parties to collect, present, and update available information in a more logical way. The information from local municipalities was supposed to be collected in 2016, but there were problems in including this information in the business register, and technical solutions have not yet materialized. Government representatives stated in interviews that it is necessary to complete commitment 4.3 before this commitment can progress. Moreover, it is necessary to increase cooperation between local governments to collect the necessary information.

Commitment 4.3

Midterm: Limited

By the midterm report, governmental and nongovernmental representatives still were discussing the publication of third sector funding in planning meetings held by the OGP Coordinating Board.[5] Therefore, the midterm status of this commitment was limited. The IRM researcher considered this activity to be overly ambitious because there was no existing register of third sector organizations that had received government funding. As a result, publishing the information first required compiling the data and updating the register. To this end, the MOF held meetings with CSOs to agree on the kinds of information and detail that should be presented. The MOF agreed with the Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations (NENO) that NENO would systematize the data and the MOF would later publish it on the State Finances site.

End of term: Limited

No specific activities were carried out, despite long discussions in the OGP Coordinating Board meetings between CSO and government representatives.[6] The government made preliminary plans, but the implementation of the commitment remained limited because data on government funding of third sector organizations still needs to be compiled.[7]

Did it open government?

To expand the scope and usability of the government's open data on public expenditures, these commitments aimed to launch a new and improved online portal with data on state and local finances, private and third sector transaction partners, and third sector funding recipients.

Commitment 4.1

Access to information: Marginal

Public accountability: Did not change

Although the new data on the State Finances application marginally improved access to information, it has the potential to lead to a major breakthrough in the future. Publicly available statistics show that there were 14300 visits to the page by the end of 2015.[8] According to the MOF, 8,000 different people used the State Finances website by the end of August 2016. The data is published in Estonian and English and contains data analysis features. Though the new data is highly technical, the MOF stated that the State Finances tool is meant to be for users who need access to detailed accounting data and who require a tool to analyse it. According to the MOF, data snapshots exist for simple users, but the main focus will remain on users with more complex needs. However, representatives from academia who work with data every day claim that the webpage currently is too difficult to use.[9] According to the government, there is already great international interest in further testing and using the tool, and other countries are considering building similar portals.

Commitment 4.2

Access to information: Did not change

Public accountability: Did not change

Given that the government has not published local government transaction partners from the private and third sectors, there has not been a change in the openness of government.

Commitment 4.3

Access to information: Did not change

Public accountability: Did not change

This commitment's activities consisted mostly of discussions that have not led to real outcomes or changes in government practices yet. As a result, the commitment did not change the status quo.

Carried forward?

This thematic area is carried forward directly in the new action plan under activity "3.2 Increasing the Transparency of the Funding of Nongovernmental Organizations," which aims to continue commitment 4.3 by making the funding of nongovernmental organizations more transparent, in accordance with the principle of good financing.

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[1] "Esileht," Riigiraha, [Estonian] http://bit.ly/1VjnlaS
[2] "Revenues," General Views, Riigiraha, http://bit.ly/2i2NGNR
[3] IRM Progress Report 2014-2015: Estonia, 47, http://bit.ly/2dFNIHX
[4] Estonia's Open Government Partnership Action Plan for 2016-2018, 7, http://bit.ly/2hbF8FO
[5] Liis Kasemets, *Avatud Valitsemise Partnerluse Koordineeriv Kogu* (Meeting protocol, Tallinn, 8 September 2015), [Estonian] 2, http://bit.ly/1XRKRwB
[6] CSO stakeholders, interview, August 2016.
[7] IRM Progress Report 2014-2015: Estonia, 47, http://bit.ly/2dFNIHX
[8] "Avalikult saab nüüd vaadata kogu riigi rahakoti sisse," [Estonian], accessed 8 October 2016, http://www.fin.ee/avalikult-saab-nuud-vaadata-kogu-riigi-rahakoti-sisse/
[9] IRM Progress Report 2014-2015: Estonia, http://bit.ly/2dFNIHX

8. Guidelines for Citizen Budgeting

4.4: Compiling the guidelines for local authorities for providing a concise overview of the local budget understandable to a citizen, in a manner similar to the State Budget Strategy and the state budget

Start Date: 1 November 2014   End Date: 30 March 2015

Responsible Institution(s): Ministry of Finance

Supporting Institution(s): E-Governance Academy, local government associations, the Government Office

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

Commitment aim

This commitment set out to transfer knowledge from the central government's Ministry of Finance (MOF) to local municipalities on how to create and to publish brief overviews of local government budgets in a user-friendly and readable way. Most local governments already published their budgets, but had not yet developed user-friendly budgets or spending documents.

Status

Midterm: Complete

According to the midterm report, the guidelines for local government budgeting overviews were created and published. The remaining challenge was to encourage local municipalities to use the guidelines. Because the main aim of the commitment was to create and to publish the guidelines, the commitment was completed.

Did it open government?

Access to information: Marginal

The guidelines encouraged local municipalities to think through how to make budgetary information more understandable and usable for citizens. Despite new guidelines, however, their usage has not increased significantly. By 2016, 41 local municipalities had used the new citizen-friendly budget formats, which represents 19 percent of all municipalities.[1] While the MOF considers this level of uptake to be a good result for the first year, following the guidelines and submitting a budgetary overview is currently voluntary.

According to the Programme and Business Manager for the Local Government Unit at EFTA Accounting OÜ, the new guidelines are well done and carry good intentions, but they are just "half a solution". In her opinion, "Following the guidelines means additional work. While preparing budgets for local governments' councils, administrators must now prepare three documents instead of two: the actual budget, explanatory letter, and overview of the budget. It would make more sense if the overview replaced the explanatory letter or if these two were combined."[2] The Lecturer of Social Policy at the University of Tartu added, "I have been following the local budget of Tartu for the last 20 years. My experience is that with each year, the budget has become more confusing and harder to follow. I am not aware of any overview of the budget and I do not believe it will work because usually such overviews follow a totally different logic than official budgets that are based on state regulations. It might become even more confusing to try to understand both."[3]

A lack of awareness of the guidelines and overviews is also an issue. Although the MOF has informed municipalities of the new guidelines through presentations, e-mails, and press releases, local government representatives and other stakeholders in the IRM researcher's focus groups were not aware of them. For example, even though the new overviews are available on the MOF website, most stakeholders working closely with the city of Tartu were not aware of them. Given these findings, this commitment marginally improved access to information.

Carried forward?

This commitment was completed and is not carried forward in the new action plan.

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[1] "Kokkuvõte Eelarve Lühiülevaate Koostamisest 2016. Aastal," Kohalike Omavalitsuste Finantsjuhtimine, Rahandusministeerium, [Estonian] http://bit.ly/2hbZqyT; National Advisory Council on State and Local Budgeting, *Recommended Budget Practices: A Framework for Improved State and Local Government Budgeting* by the Government Finance Officers Association (Report, Chicago, 1998), http://bit.ly/2hXgDxz

[2] Mrs. Helika Part (Programme and Business Manager, Local Government Unit, EFTA Accounting OÜ), interview with the IRM researcher, 25 February 2017.

[3] Mr. Jüri Kõre (Lecturer of Social Policy, University of Tartu), interview with the IRM researcher, 25 February 2017.

9. Citizen-centered Public Services

5.1: An interactive web-based toolbox for developing public services will be created where service developers from the public, private and NGO sector can obtain guidelines, methods, handbooks and best practices for developing new services or for redesigning existing services.

Start Date: 1 September 2014   End Date: 30 September 2016

5.2: To create an overview of public services where all public services would be described in a unified, machine and human readable form, and where citizens can find information on what quality level service is promised to them

Start Date: 1 July 2014   End Date: 31 December 2015

5.3: Pilot projects will be carried out with selected public services being designed in accordance with the guidelines of designing user-friendly e-services

Start Date: Not specified   End Date: 30 June 2016

Responsible Institution(s): Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications

Supporting institution(s): State Information System Authorities (RIHA), Ministry of Finance (public procurement registry), other government institutions

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion / End of Term				Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsens	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
5.1. Guidelines for redesigning public services (Midterm)			✔		✔			✔		✔					✔			✔			
5.1. (End of Term)															✔						
5.2. Registry of public services (Midterm)			✔		✔			✔			✔				✔					✔	
5.2. (End of Term)																✔					
5.3. User-centric public services (Midterm)				✔	✔					✔					✔					✔	
5.3. (End of Term)																✔					

Commitment aim

This thematic area aimed to increase the user-friendliness of public services. Previously, government agencies and local authorities did not provide a uniform database of their services. Moreover, the cooperation was weak between public institutions in public service development. To address this, the action plan set out to prepare guidelines on the redesigning of public services (5.1), to create an overview of all public services offered by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications (5.2), and to carry out pilot projects (5.3) to design public services according to guidelines of user-friendly e-services.

Commitment 5.1 aimed to make all materials (guidelines, methods, handbooks, and best practices) easily accessible and usable by developing an interactive web-based toolbox for public service developers from the public, private, and nongovernmental sectors. Commitment 5.2 aimed to create an overview and description of all public services in the portfolio of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications in a unified, machine- and human-readable form so citizens can find information on the quality of services that they should expect to receive. Commitment 5.3 aimed to carry out pilot projects in which selected public services are designed according to guidelines of user-friendly e-services.

Midterm Status

Commitment 5.1

Midterm: Substantial

At the midterm review, the government gathered the materials for the toolbox but lacked financing to make the toolbox interactive. However, the activities took place according to schedule and the completion level was substantial.

End of term: Substantial

At the end of 2015, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications applied for funds for this commitment from the Horizon 2020 program, but the funding was not received. Therefore, the government stated that the interactive toolbox would not be completed and would be postponed to an undefined date.[1] The materials on how to develop e-services are now available on the webpage, but are not being automatically updated.[2] Furthermore, similar materials are available on various other websites. According to a representative from the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the plan turned out to be more ambitious and expensive than first expected and lacked the necessary funding to achieve completion.[3]

Commitment 5.2

Midterm: Substantial

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications published a description of all of the public services it provides, as well as those provided by its agencies. Other ministries were expected to follow suit. The list of all public e-services was expected to be published in a single format by March 2016. The activities took place according to schedule.

End of term: Completed

This commitment is completed because the information on public services is available on the webpage of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications. The webpage also includes information on services offered by all other ministries.[4]

Commitment 5.3

Midterm: Substantial

Four pilot projects were funded to design user-friendly e-services: (1) the Estonian Tax and Customs Board e-rescheduling taxes and the Estonian Road Administration's e-services; (2) the privileges and rights of a traffic registry; (3) a logbook of sample numbers; and, (4) ordering and managing number plates. All four projects were in development and were expected to be completed earlier than planned, by the end of 2015 (the official deadline was June 2016).

End of term: Completed

All four e-service pilot projects of this commitment are completed, as planned. The pilots focused on improving the user-friendliness and design of certain public services. One of the projects involved updating the Tax and Customs Board website, creating an online platform for people in debt, and simplifying required procedures. The other three projects improved the Road Administration website, created a real-time log of license plates for test vehicles, simplified ordering vehicle registration plates, and created real-time management of traffic rights and privileges. According to the administration, all improvements have received positive feedback.[5]

Did it open government?

This activity area was planned to change the many public services that were not user-friendly and the fact that there was no comprehensive database or accessible register of public services for institutions and citizens.

Commitment 5.1

Access to information: Did not change

This commitment did not change the status quo because the toolbox for developing public services—the core of the commitment—was not created. Although the government published the materials for the toolbox, this information is available on other similar sites such as the State Finances (riigiraha.fin.ee) and State Services websites.

Commitment 5.2

Access to information: Major

This commitment had a major impact in terms of access to information that is easily readable, usable and valuable. Citizens and civil servants now can use the public service catalogue on the Ministry of Economic Affair and Communication's webpage to see an overview of all available services offered by government ministries. At the time of writing this report, 1,566 services are listed and described in the dataset.[6] Moreover, it is possible to use this new information to monitor the effectiveness of public services. For example, only 10 percent of public services are requesting and evaluating feedback from citizens.

Commitment 5.3

Access to information: Marginal

The four e-service pilot projects carried out as part of this commitment were successful and improved the user-friendliness of services.[7] For example, currently 72.91 percent of customers are satisfied with the Road Administration services and 63.5 percent of customers are satisfied with the services of the Tax and Customs Board. The updates to the Tax and Customs Board and Road Administration websites simplified common services such as ordering vehicle registration plates, rescheduling taxes, and accessing the traffic registry. Although stakeholders received the changes well, the updates cover a rather marginal area of services. Improved e-services related to public transportation or other major public amenities would have had a broader effect on the opening of government. As a result, this commitment opened the government in a marginal way.

Carried forward?

Moving forward, stakeholders find that evaluation and measurement options should be further developed in the public service database**Error! Bookmark not defined.**(5.2), and the pilot projects should be analyzed and given feedback (5.3). Although none of these commitments are carried forward to the third action plan, the thematic area is carried forward partially in the new commitment called "Increase the Participation of Users in Designing and Developing Public Services." The idea behind commitment 5.3 is carried forward with new activities under activity "1.1 e-Tax and Customs Board 2020," which aims to develop the current self-service environment of the Tax and Customs Board.[8]

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[1] Liis Kasemets, *Avatud Valitsemise Partnerluse Koordineeriv Kogu* (Meeting protocol, Tallinn, 8 December 2015), 2, [Estonian] http://bit.ly/2htdrpK

[2] "Information Society Services," Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, Republic of Estonia, http://bit.ly/2hJ7KHi

[3] CSO stakeholders, interview, August 2016.

[4] "Teenuste Otsing," Majandus- Ja Kommunikatsiooni-Ministeerium, [Estonian] https://www.mkm.ee/et/teenuste-otsing

[5] *Avatud Valitsemise Partnerluse Koordineeriv Kogu* (8 December 2015), 2, [Estonian] http://bit.ly/2htdrpK

[6] "Teenused Numbrites," Kõik Teenused, Majandus- Ja Kommunikatsiooni-Ministeerium, [Estonian] https://www.mkm.ee/et/statistika/valitsus

[7] "Teenused Numbrites," [Estonian] https://www.mkm.ee/et/statistika/valitsus

[8] Estonia's Open Government Partnership Action Plan for 2016-2018, 10-11, http://bit.ly/2hbF8FO

10. Access to E-Services for Nonresidents

5.4 Start of issuing digital ID documents to non-residents, thus improving the opportunities of non-residents to use e-services and participate in affaires of the society as well as business

Start Date: 1 December 2014   End Date: 30 June 2016

Responsible Institution(s): Ministry of the Interior (first), Government Office (later)

Supporting Institution(s): Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice, Parliament, Enterprise Estonia, representatives from the private sector

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm / End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsens	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
			✔		Unclear						✔				✔			✔			
																✔					

Commitment aim

This commitment aimed to promote e-residency by issuing digital identification (ID) documents to nonresidents of Estonia. Given that e-services for e-residents previously were hard to use, and given that the number of e-residents and digital ID owners rose quickly during the action plan, the commitment was modified significantly. Different activities were added to give e-residents better access to e-services and to make these services more user-friendly. These activities had the goal of further involving e-residents in Estonian society and business.

Status

Midterm: Substantial

At the midterm review, the completion of this commitment was substantial. By September 2015, the government had issued 5,000 digital ID documents,[1] the user-friendliness of e-services had improved, and different expansions of this commitment were planned.[2] The development of additional e-services for e-residents was planned for the end of 2015 and beginning of 2016.

End of term: Complete

At the time of writing this report, there are 12,171 Estonian e-residents.[3] Because of this commitment, e-residents can establish a company online, open a bank account in Estonia, administer a company online, and digitally sign documents and contracts.[4] Although the government continues to improve e-services, the commitment—as it is written in the action plan—is fully completed.

Did it open government?

Access to information: Did not change

This commitment initially aimed to start issuing digital IDs to nonresidents. Later, improving the user-friendliness of e-services for e-residents and promoting the program overall became key objectives. As stated in the midterm report, this commitment was not clearly relevant to OGP values because it did not include a clear element of access to information, public accountability, or civic participation. Nonetheless, the commitment improved e-resident access to public services and could represent a major push for opening government in the future. E-residents are able perform different functions online like filing taxes, submitting annual reports, participating in shareholder meetings, and simpler things like changing a company e-mail address, which previously required visiting a notary. Even if all of these services were available before, now they are faster and easier.

In addition, international attention towards Estonia as an e-country and e-residency could further compel the government to open. A recent report on eGovernance in the EU shows that Estonia is one of the leading countries "in terms of digitization and penetration of its e-government strategies in the society."[5] Several stakeholders implied that Estonia could become one of the leading countries in the EU's technological and innovation sector.[6] All of this positive feedback and publicity is raising public expectations for openness, which should push the government to improve public services constantly and to be more open about its processes.

Carried forward?

This commitment is not carried forward in the new action plan.

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[1] Taavi Kotka, "E-Residentsus, Riiklik Idufirma," Arvamus, Postimees, 11 October 2015, [Estonian] http://bit.ly/1Rkj0oq
[2] IRM Progress Report 2014-2015: Estonia, 54, http://bit.ly/2dFNIHX
[3] "Dashboard," Cyfe, https://goo.gl/O5cQwI
[4] "Services and Benefits," Estonian, e-Residency, e-Estonia.com, http://bit.ly/2dHSoNp
[5] "EU eGovernment Report 2016: How Estonia Made It to the Top, Well-Explained," News, e-Estonia.com, http://bit.ly/2h3KD6h
[6] André Karpištšenko, "Eesti Võiks Saada Eestvedajaks Tehnoloogiamaailmas," Arvamus, Postimees, 4 October 2016, [Estonian] http://bit.ly/2hJ7yaT

11. Enhancing Open Data Supply and Reuse by Nongovernmental Actors

6.1: Transforming of open data portal opendata.riik.ee from pilot use to so-called real use, with a guarantee for basic level organizational support

Start Date: 1 July 2014   End Date: 30 November 2014

6.2: Organizing of public competitions for opening data, incl. implementation of pilot projects of link data

Start Date: 1 July 2014   End Date: 31 July 2016

6.3: Organizing of events facilitating the recycling of open data (hackathons, trainings etc.)

Start Date: 1 July 2014   End Date: 31 July 2016

Responsible Institution(s): Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications

Supporting Institution(s): Association of Information Technology and Telecommunications, open data community, data owners in the public sector

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion				Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsens	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
6.1. Open data portal			✔		✔			✔			✔					✔			✔		
																✔					
6.2. Opening data			✔		✔						✔					✔			✔		
																✔					
6.3. Supporting nongovernmental open data use		✔			✔	✔				✔					✔				✔		
																✔					

Commitment aim

This thematic area aimed to create wider use of open data by enabling nongovernmental actors to participate in the co-creation of processes such as knowledge, innovations, and services. Before this commitment, the available data was hard to use because it had not been cleaned, and each government institution had its own logic on how to upload data.[1] To improve this policy area, the following commitments were made: transforming the open data portal from pilot to full use (6.1), organizing public competitions for opening data (6.2), and organizing events such as hackathons or trainings that involve public participation in the recycling and reuse of open data (6.3).

Status

Commitment 6.1

Midterm: Complete

By the midterm report, this commitment was completed. The government launched the open data portal and created the organizational structure to keep the portal running.[2] For additional information, please see the midterm report.

Commitment 6.2

Midterm: Complete

This commitment was completed. The government organized a competition for the best pilot project and funded several pilot projects geared towards opening and improving data. Please see the midterm report for additional details.

Commitment 6.3

Midterm: Substantial

By the midterm report, the government held information days[3] and some trainings about open data recycling.[4] The level of completion of this activity was substantial because most of the planned activities took place, although a hackathon was planned for Spring 2016.

End of term: Complete

In March 2016, the government carried out the final pending activity of this commitment—a hackathon concerning the use of open data in Tartu.[5] The start-up hub known as Garage48 is arranging a new hackathon in October 2016, in cooperation with the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications and Information System Authority.[6] Although there are several new upcoming events, the commitment has been completed.

Did it open government?

To create the necessary infrastructure to further use of the open data portal, several activities were implemented such as launching the final version of the portal, organizing public competitions for opening data, and organizing events that facilitate the recycling of open data. For example, Garage48 Open and Big Data 2016 Event included four events in Tallinn and Tartu.[7] Although the commitment activities were positive steps toward improving the availability of open data and building the capacity of citizens to understand and expand open data, many limitations remain. For example, there are still no data standards or government personnel who focus specifically on open data, and releasing data is still voluntary, which limits its availability.[8]

Commitment 6.1

Access to information: Marginal

The new portal launched as part of this commitment has received 2,344 visits. The portal has the potential to be an important tool for accessing information, but is underused at the moment.[9] According to academic, private sector, and civil society stakeholders, the usability of the data is low because the data has not been cleaned, and the databases are small in size.[10] In fact, using the open data in its current form sometimes can be more complicated than requesting information from government institutions. The open data portal requires higher quality data before analyses of the information can lead to policy planning and decision making that is better informed.

Commitment 6.2

Access to information: Marginal

This commitment led to the launch of an open data competition. The projects that received funding from the government focused on improving the quality of existing institutional datasets. The datasets that became public as a result of the competition included information on the usage of various spaces, rooms, archives, public library data, museum data, and environmental statistics. All of these datasets are available through the Estonian open data portal.[11] Although the scope of the commitment was limited, the competition and resulting datasets were a positive step forward in access to information.

Commitment 6.3

Access to information: Marginal

Civic participation: Marginal

This commitment resulted in information days, open data trainings, and an open data hackathon. These activities taught citizens about the benefits and characteristics of open data and data reuse, and they led to brainstorming of data-driven solutions. Although these events did not open new data, per se, they were well-received and trained citizens on how to understand, use, and reuse existing information.[12]

Carried forward?

The commitments were not carried forward.

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[1] IRM Progress Report 2014-2015: Estonia, 58, http://bit.ly/2dFNIHX
[2] "Avaandmete Portaal," [Estonian] https://opendata.riik.ee/
[3] "Ettekanded," Tark E-Riik, [Estonian] http://bit.ly/1T8KUVK
[4] "Hommikuseminar: Mis On Avaandmed Ning Kuidas Neid Praktikas Hallata?," Eesti Koolitus- Ja Konverentsikeskus, [Estonian] http://bit.ly/1WNaRZZ
[5] "Tartu Avaandmete Tuleviku Arutelu Tõi Kokku Rekordilised 87 Huvilist," EESTI, KIIP, 8 March 2016, [Estonian] http://bit.ly/2ihmxG2
[6] Hans Lõugas, "Garage48 Kutsub Rakendusi Tegema Ava-andmete Ehk Uue Musta Kullaga," Geenius, October 2016, [Estonian] http://bit.ly/2ihoFgX
[7] "Events," Garage48, [Estonian] http://garage48.org/events
[8] IRM Progress Report 2014-2015: Estonia, 55, http://bit.ly/2dFNIHX
[9] "Kokku," Portaali Kasutus, Avaandmete Portaal, [Estonian] https://opendata.riik.ee/data/site-usage#totals
[10] IRM Progress Report 2014-2015: Estonia, 58, http://bit.ly/2dFNIHX
[11] Avaandmete Portaal, [Estonian] https://opendata.riik.ee/
[12] "Hommikuseminar: Mis On Avaandmed Ning Kuidas Neid Praktikas Hallata?," Eesti Koolitus- Ja Konverentsikeskus, [Estonian] http://bit.ly/1WNaRZZ

METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

Commitments in the end of term report are clustered differently from the original OGP action plan: there are 11 thematic areas which involve 23 commitments, instead of the action plan's six commitments and 23 activities. This report is based on desk-based analysis of governmental websites, review of the government's midterm self-assessment report, analysis of the commitments, and monitoring the process of elaboration of the second action plan. In addition, as part of the midterm review, the IRM researcher conducted one focus group in Tallinn consisting of nine civil society representatives and one focus group in Tartu consisting of three civil society representatives and three local government administrators. The IRM researcher also conducted 11 individual interviews. For the end-of-term report, the IRM researcher conducted one small focus group consisting of three representatives of CSOs, as well as six individual interviews with CSOs and ministries (four CSOs and two state representatives) who commented on the implementation of the action plan and gave their opinions on the OGP process in Estonia.

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

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