RIIGIKANTSELEI

ESTONIA'S OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP ACTION PLAN FOR 2018–2020

Tallinn, 2018.

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

The Open Government Partnership (hereinafter "OGP"[1]) is an international initiative that aims to increase openness, transparency, and citizen-centredness in the exercise of public authority, using new technologies in doing so. The number of countries participating in the initiative has increased to 76 and all of these countries have assumed an obligation to adhere to the principles of open government and cooperate with non-governmental organisations in developing a specific action plan. Both domestic and international monitoring has been established for preparing the action plan and following its implementation.

The fourth Action Plan of Estonia was prepared under the guidance of the Coordinating Council of governmental authorities, the parliament (Riigikogu), local governments, and non-governmental organisations. The OGP 2018–2020 Action Plan continues to focus on inclusive and transparent policy-making that has been Estonia's priority in all action plans.

The aim of the action plan is to increase inclusiveness and transparency in policy-making at both the state and local level. To this end, requirements will be defined for creating a new information system that would support a more inclusive process of drafting legislation. Trainings and advice will be provided to promote earlier and more substantial civic engagement. At the local level, support will be provided for developing and implementing local open government action plans. In addition, an easy-to-use tool will be created, where the public can compare the quality levels of public services in different local governments. Further work will be done to increase the openness of the Estonian parliament and develop skills for participatory democracy in school education.

The implementation of the principles of open government is also supported by other development or action plans compassing activities not included in the OGP Action Plan. For example, corruption prevention is steered separately with the Anti-Corruption Strategy[2]. The Civil Society Development Concept contributes to the empowerment of capable and socially active citizens. Action Plan for Administrative capacity and OECD Public Governance Review places the focus on increasing the capabilities of policy-making. This includes supporting the capabilities of civil servants, social partners, and non-governmental partners. The general principles of legal policy provide quality standard for legislating, including minimum requirements for impact analysis and stakeholder engagement.

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[1] In English Open Government Partnership (OGP), http://www.opengovpartnership.org/

[2] http://www.korruptsioon.ee/et/korruptsioonivastane-tegevus-eestis/korruptsioonivastane-strateegia-2013-2020

2. PREVIOUS ACTIVITIES IN THE OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP

Estonia's priorities in promoting open government have been similar in all action plans. Open and inclusive policy-making has been a priority throughout all action plans. Previously, citizen-centred public services and transparency in using public money was also emphasised.

Figure 1. Priorities and commitments of OGP Action Plans

2012–2014	2014–2016	2016–2018	2018–2020
Development of public services	Citizen-centred public services	Citizen-centred public services	
▪ Development of public e-services ▪ Granting the public use of state information assets ▪ Greater openness and predictability of policymaking	▪ To increase the quality of development and provision of public services ▪ To use open data widely	▪ Increase the participation of users in designing and developing public services	
	Open public policy making process that includes citizens	Open and inclusive policy-making	Open and inclusive policy-making
	▪ To improve the iccessibility of information needed for participation ▪ To improve opportunities for participation in the public policy making process ▪ To increase the ability of government institutions and non-governmental partners to cooperate, engage stakeholders and participate	▪ Increase engagement and transparency in policy-making	▪ Increase engagement and transparency in policy-making ▪ Increase engagement and transparency in local governments ▪ Development attitudes towards and skills in participatory democracy
	Transparent State Budget and finance management		
	▪ To increase the transparency and understandability of public funds	▪ Increase the transparency of the use of public funds	
Addressing public official ethics			
Prevention of corruption and conflicts of interest			

In earlier action plans, information availability and participation opportunities were improved **to support more inclusive and transparent policy-making**. The Citizen Initiative Portal was developed, where everyone can present a problem or a question related to the society, publicly discuss it or compile and send collective addresses to the Riigikogu. The e-Consultation System now includes the opportunity of notifying stakeholders – notifications can be used to let the public know that the preparation of draft legislation has begun, summarize the results of public consultations or communicate any other important aspects during the legislation drafting process. Information related to participation opportunities is now displayed in a unified manner on the websites of ministries and the information is kept up-to-date thanks to the network of participation coordinators. The Government Office published a visualised overview of the life cycle of policy-making and draft legislation process on their website[3], also supporting the ministries in testing new engagement solutions.

In order to enable the non-governmental sector to better analyse the public policy and involve its partner organisations in the formulation of opinions, a development programme of non-governmental organisations was implemented to increase their participation capabilities; the participation capabilities of social partners were also supported. Strategic partnership concept paper was developed to make financing non-governmental organisations more transparent.

In order to increase the transparency and clarity in the management of public funds, the accounting data of the government sector were published in the application Riigiraha and an overview was created on the Internet regarding payments made to non-governmental organisations by central government authorities. Guidelines and examples were developed for local governments on how to prepare a clearly understandable overview of the local government budget for citizens, and advice was given to local governments on implementing an inclusive budget.

The e-Governance Academy helped to develop an open government action plan in two joined local governments and prepared general recommendations for an open government for all local governments. Supporting local governments in developing their open government frameworks and actions is continued. Current action plan will also improve access to information regarding local public service quality.

The previous Action Plans also focused on **shaping citizen-centred public services.** Four test projects were carried out pursuant to the guidelines of e-services to improve the quality of developing and providing public services. In addition, the citizen-centred approach was used in developing and implementing the Estonian Tax and Customs Board e-interface and Zero Bureaucracy initiative**.** Approximately 300 public services were made public in a uniform and machine-readable format to support wider use of open data. The open data portal, opendata.riik.ee, was developed. Application rounds were organised for publishing open data and implementing test projects for linked data. Events promoting the use of open data were held.

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[3] https://riigikantselei.ee/et/poliitikakujundamise-ja-oigusloome-protsess

3. THE PROCESS FOR PREPARING THE ACTION PLAN

The preparation of the action plan was carried out under the leadership of the OGP Coordinating Council, which agreed on the principles and schedule and made substantive decisions.

Table 1: process schedule

Time	Activities	Outcome
13 March 2018	Meeting of the OGP Coordinating Council	Agreements have been reached on the process and principles of preparing the OGP 2018–2020 Action Plan
13 March – 12 April 2018	Public call for ideas	Proposals for promoting the Open Government Partnership in 2018–2020 have been gathered
13 April – 08 May 2018	Discussing ideas with non-governmental organisations and possible implementers. Preparing the text of the 2018–2020 Action Plan	The submitted ideas have been discussed and a proposal has been made to the Coordinating Council for the priorities, commitments, and activities included in the action plan
08 May 2018	Meeting of the OGP Coordinating Council on OGP week	The priorities, commitments and activities have been agreed on
29 May – 15 June 2018	Public consultation of the OGP 2018–2020 Action Plan draft	
19 June 2018	Meeting of the OGP Coordinating Council	
August 2018	Presenting the OGP Action Plan to the Government and international support unit	The Action Plan has been approved and presented to the international OGP support unit
July 2018 – June 2020	Implementing the action plan	The commitments of the action plan have been met

The open government guidelines have been adhered to in preparing this action plan. The Government Office coordinates activities related to partnership and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs represents external relations.

4. FUTURE ACTION PLAN

The fourth Action Plan focuses on one priority: open and inclusive policy-making.

Priority: open and inclusive policy-making

The goal is to increase inclusion and openness in policy-making, supporting earlier and more substantial participation and improving information availability.

The aim of the priority of the open and inclusive policy-making process is to assert the culture of policy-making through open and inclusive decision-making processes, which is characterised by transparency of governance and greater trust between public authorities and citizens. The principles of open policy-making and legislative drafting have not been integrated into decision-making processes to the full extent so far. Non-governmental organisations complain that they learn about the decision being prepared too late for meaningful participation, or that the engagement remains formal and superficial. In the case of a desire to participate, it is often not known when and how to submit proposals. The impact of various interest groups on legislative drafting is unclear, and at times it seems unequal, which in turn amplifies the prejudices of the bias of politicians when making decisions.

After the administrative reform, the OGP Action Plan also focuses on open government at the local level and continues to develop attitudes towards and skills in participatory democracy in general education.

The Action Plan provides three commitments and prescribes six activities for meeting these.

Priority: open and inclusive policy-making	1. commitment: increase engagement and transparency in policy-making	Activities: 1.1. Information technology supporting transparent and inclusive policy-making 1.2. Shaping a policy-making process that is inclusive, knowledge-based, and citizen-centred, and developing skills 1.3. Increasing the openness and transparency of the Riigikogu
	2. commitment: increase engagement and transparency in local governments	2.1. Developing open government action plans and activities in local governments 2.2. Simple and user-friendly presentation of of the local public service levels
	3. commitment: develop attitudes towards and skills in participatory democracy	3.1. Develop attitudes towards and skills in participatory democracy

1. COMMITMENT: INCREASE ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY IN POLICY-MAKING

1.1. Information technology supporting transparent and inclusive policy-making		
Commitment Start and End Date July 2018 – June 2020		
Lead implementing agency/actor	The Government Office	
Other Actors Involved	State actors involved	All ministries, constitutional institutions and national associations of local governments
	CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups	Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations, Estonian Cooperation Assembly, e-Governance Academy, etc.
Commitment description		
What is the public problem that the commitment will address?	The e-Consultation Information System (EIS) was introduced in 2011 to coordinate draft legislation between ministries and manage documents of the European Union. Back then, it was a unique information system combining three earlier ones that was also open for the public, enabling searching for information and commenting of draft legislations. By now, the system is technically outdated and the expectations of the users, both officials and stakeholders, have increased. The stakeholders are interested in an open platform that would allow them to participate in the earlier stages of policy-making (not just in the final stage of coordinating or commenting documents) and observe the process history and forming of decisions. Although EIS has been developed further, e.g. by adding a notification function to share information regarding initiatives earlier than previously, the new functions are not used sufficiently and do not help in meeting the goal of allowing early access to the public. Additionally, instead of being user-friendly, the environment is slow and complex. Another channel for participation in addition to EIS is osale.ee, which is also technologically outdated and insufficiently used.	
What is the commitment?	The Government Office in cooperation with other agencies, and stakeholders will define requirements for creating a new information system that would at least cover the functions of the current e-Consultation system and osale.ee.	
How will the commitment contribute to solve the public problem?	Defining the requirements together with stakeholders is a precondition for a new environment that would support transparent and inclusive policy-making and meet the needs of different users.	

Which OGP values is this commitment relevant to?	Transparency Civic participation	
Additional information	Efforts to promote EIS as a main channel for participation will be continued while developing the new information system. In addition to updating EIS, the Ministry of Justice has initiated the pre-analysis process necessary for developing a collaboration environment for policy makers. It is important that the possible new developments be seamlessly compatible.	
Milestone Activity	Start Date:	End Date:
Assessing current situation and needs of the citizens, stakeholders and state agencies, including analysis of user experiences.	July 2018	December 2018
Considering alternatives and describing the functions and interfacing of the new environment.	January 2018	June 2019
Preparing terms of reference, including describing the requirements of the information system and making a prototype.	January 2018	June 2020

1.2. Shaping a policy-making process that is inclusive, knowledge-based, and citizen-centred, and developing skills		
Commitment Start and End Date April 2018 – December 2019		
Lead implementing agency/actor	The Government Office	
Other Actors Involved	State actors involved	The Ministry of Finance, State Shared Service Centre, all ministries
	CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups	Praxis, Centar, Velvet, Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations
Commitment description		
What is the public problem that the commitment will address?	The independent reporting mechanism's national researcher (OGP 2016–2018), the Coordinating Council, and the task force of the public sector and social innovation have all emphasised the need to improve leadership and provide more training courses related to engagement. The network of engagement coordinators of the ministries was created in the fall of 2007 when each ministry appointed one or several engagement coordinator who would be	

	responsible for the dissemination of information and counselling regarding engagement practices in the ministry. The goal of the network is exchanging information related to engagement and harmonising the inclusion practices of the ministries. The coordinators require development and empowerment to enhance engagement practices and resolve the problems related to it. Senior managers of civil services play an important role in supporting inclusive policy-making, as their attitudes and skills have an impact on the engagement practice of state agencies. Prior to 2013, central training courses on inclusion were organised for 268 officials, and in 2011–2017, roughly the same number of representatives from non-governmental organisations and agencies attended the inclusion spring school. However, no additional training courses have been organised in the previous years. Some of the policy-making skills that that need promoting are evidence-based methods and data processing, storytelling, and visualisation.
What is the commitment?	▪ Improve the work of the network of engagement coordinators, strengthen the role of coordinators in ministries, and develop their leadership skills. ▪ Improve the attitudes and skills of top civil servants in leading inclusive, citizen-centred, and knowledge-based policy-making. ▪ Develop the skills of central governments and local officials and non-governmental organisations in engagement, negotiation, and impact assessment.
How will the commitment contribute to solve the public problem?	▪ oordinators help to disseminate and introduce good engagement practices and increase the use of participation channels in the ministries. ▪ Training senior manages of civil services would shape the attitudes of the managers and develop skills to lead inclusive and citizen-centred policy-making. ▪ Training officials and non-governmental organisations improves their skills in engagement and participation.
Which OGP values is this commitment relevant to?	Civic participation
Additional information	The activity is funded from the administrative capacity priority axis measures.

Milestone Activity	Start Date:	End Date:
▪ The organisation of work of the network of involvement coordinators has been revised and the network is actively operating. ▪ A procurement has been published for carrying out the	April 2018	December 2018

policy-making training programme for senior managers of civil services. ▪ 100 state or local government officials and representatives of non-governmental organisations have been trained. The programme has been reviewed and updated based on feedback from the first training groups.		
▪ The network of involvement coordinators is actively operating. ▪ 40 top civil servants have been trained. ▪ 600 state or local government officials and representatives of non-governmental organisations have been trained.	April 2018	December 2019
▪ The network of involvement coordinators is actively operating. ▪ 40 top civil servants have been trained. ▪ At least 700 state or local government officials and representatives of non-governmental organisations have been trained.	April 2018	June 2020

1.3. Increasing the openness and transparency of the Riigikogu		
Commitment Start and End Date July 2018 – June 2020		
Lead implementing agency/actor		Riigikogu
Other Actors Involved	State actors involved	
	CSOs, private sector,multilaterals, working groups	The Estonian Cooperation Assembly, Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations
Commitment description		

What is the public problem that the commitment will address?	In 2016, the Riigikogu Rules of Procedure and Internal Rules Act was amended, making the minutes of committee sittings more informative than before.
	The State Gazette (*Riigi Teataja*) enables subscribing to e-mail notifications regarding all draft legislations and the stages of legislative proceeding, from coordination to publishing in the State Gazette.
	In 2017, the Anti-Corruption Select Committee developed recommendations for the members of the Riigikogu on how to communicate with lobbyist and described sample situations which may occur[4].
	Therefore, the openness of the Riigikogu has somewhat increased; however, the practice has not been harmonised between committees and problems occur with the speed of publishing information, participation in the legislative proceeding of draft legislation, and access to data regarding both web publications and open data.
What is the commitment?	▪ In order to make the information on the web page of the Riigikogu more available and user-friendly, the web page is further developed in a manner which allows processing data related to the plenary assembly in a machine-readable format. ▪ Publishing of minutes of committees is hastened and harmonised between committees.
How will the commitment contribute to solve the public problem?	▪ By publishing the open data, information related to legislating becomes more available and more possibilities are created to use information published by the Riigikogu. ▪ Faster publishing of minutes makes legislating more transparent, as the public receives up-to-date information on how the decisions are formed.
Which OGP values is this commitment relevant to?	Transparency Civic participation
Additional information	-

Milestone Activity	Start Date:	End Date:
Open data of the Riigikogu are being tested.	October 2018	May 2019
Open data of the Riigikogu are constantly available.	October 2018	June 2019
Minutes are published as soon as possible after a sitting of a committee has finished.	July 2018	June 2020

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[4] https://www.riigikogu.ee/komisjonide-teated/korruptsioonivastane-erikomisjon/soovitused-riigikogu-liikmetele-huviruhmade-esindajatega-suhtlemisel/

2. COMMITMENT: INCREASE ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

2.1. Developing open government action plans and activities in local governments		
Commitment Start and End Date September 2018 – December 2020		
Lead implementing agency/actor	The Ministry of Finance	
Other Actors Involved	State actors involved	Municipalities
	CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups	The Association of Estonian Cities and Rural Municipalities, e-Governance Academy
Commitment description		
What is the public problem that the commitment will address?	Following the 2017 administrative-territorial reform, there are 79 local governments in Estonia, most of which adhere to the principles of open government (e.g. publishing information on their web site, youth councils, broadcasts of council sittings on VOLIS, inclusive budgeting) but do not always comprehensively think through their activities and implement them systematically. Some local governments lack engagement of the public and non-governmental organisations, others do not publish their activities sufficiently, do not notify, etc. In the framework of the 2016–2018 OGP Action Plan, the e-Governance Academy helped to develop an action plan for an open government[5] in two joined local governments, Elva and Lääneranna, and prepared general recommendations for an open government in all local governments[6]. Further activities are required to introduce these recommendations to local leaders as well as citizens and take action.	
What is the commitment?	Supported by the European Social Fund, the Ministry of Finance is organising a call for proposals to increase the cooperation and leadership capabilities of local governments, enabling, among other things, application for support for promoting an open government; applications can be submitted by all local governments, their associations, organisations engaged in other areas, and non-governmental associations that wish to contribute to raising awareness on activities of open government or its implementation on the local level.	

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[5] Project overview: https://www.ega.ee/et/project/avatud-valitsemine-uhinevates-omavalitsustes/, open government recommendations for Lääneranna rural municipality: https://ega.ee/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Ettepanekud-avatud-valitsemiseks-L-neranna-vallas_final1.pdf and open government recommendations for Elva rural municipality: https://ega.ee/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Ettepanekud-avatud-valitsemiseks-Elva-vallas_final1.pdf

[6] https://ega.ee/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/ettepanekud-avatumale-omavalitsusele_logo.pdf

How will the commitment contribute to solve the public problem?	Awareness on the principles of open government is increased and following these principles ensures more efficient participation of citizens and better availability of information related to decision-forming.	
Which OGP values is this commitment relevant to?	Transparency Civic participation	
Additional information	The exact budget and number of projects depends on the applications submitted to local government and outcomes of assessing the projects in comparison to other projects. The activity is funded from the administrative capacity priority axis measures.	
Milestone Activity	Start Date:	End Date:
Discussing the conditions of the call for proposals with stakeholders.	September 2018	September 2018
Announcing the call for proposal.	October 2018	December 2018
At least five local governments have developed their open government action plans or implemented activities that increase awareness on the open government principles and their implementation.	December 2018	December 2020

2.2. Simple and user-friendly presentation of the local public service levels		
Commitment Start and End Date July 2018 – June 2020		
Lead implementing agency/actor	The Ministry of Finance	
Other Actors Involved	State actors involved	The Government Office
	CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups	The Association of Estonian Cities and Rural Municipalities, Estonian Cooperation Assembly
Commitment description		
What is the public problem that the commitment will address?	The availability and quality of local public services varies across local governments. At the same time, there is no reference information on the service level, including quality and availability, which complicates improvements.	

What is the commitment?	The methodology and analysis completed in the summer of 2018 gives an overview of which services are provided in local governments and on what level. An attractive and comprehensive tool available for all citizens is developed based on this methodology and analysis, and each citizen, local government, and ministry can use this tool to view the data of their local government categorised by areas and compare these to Estonian averages and data of other local governments. The users can give feedback in the application.	
How will the commitment contribute to solve the public problem?	The tool is a source of information for the citizens, offering knowledge on what arguments to use when participating in discussions and what service level to demand in local governments. Simultaneously, it serves as a management tool for both local governments and the central government. Local governments can find out exactly what is done well and what needs improving. The local government can plan more exact intervention and support measures to improve the service quality.	
Which OGP values is this commitment relevant to?	Transparency	
Additional information	-	
Milestone Activity	Start Date:	End Date:
Developing a presentation prototype in cooperation with partners	July 2018	December 2018
Preparing terms of reference for the development in cooperation with partners	July 2018	February 2019
Completion of the development	February 2019	December 2019
Promoting active use of the tool	January 2020	June 2020

3. COMMITMENT: DEVELOP ATTITUDES TOWARDS AND SKILLS IN PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

3.1. Develop attitudes towards and skills in participatory democracy		
Commitment Start and End Date January 2016 – December 2019 (following the previous action plan)		
Lead implementing agency/actor		The Ministry of Education and Research
Other Actors Involved	State actors involved	Foundation Innove
	CSOs, private sector,multilaterals, working groups	Non-governmental organisations concerned, Tallinn University, University of Tartu, Estonian History and Civics Teachers Association, Society of Human Studies, regional subject sections, Estonian School Student Councils' Union, publishing houses, etc.
Commitment description		
What is the public problem that the commitment will address?		Open and inclusive policy presumes development of the citizens' attitudes towards and skills in democracy. This does not merely mean acquiring knowledge in lessons but also developing more comprehensive attitudes in schools.
What is the commitment?		When updating the national curricula of basic schools and upper secondary schools and preparing the education and research strategy in 2018–2019, the Ministry of Education and Research consults with appropriate stakeholders, including youth organisations, to ensure the inclusion of skills necessary for participatory democracy in the strategy and curricula. The interested parties (including non-governmental organisations) present their proposals to update the learning objectives and learning outcomes pursuant to the principles of the new concept of learning[7]. .
How will the commitment contribute to solve the public problem?		By knowing methods of participatory democracy, including possibilities of ICT, the citizens will have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to pursue open government and participate in it.
Which OGP values is this commitment relevant to?		Civic participation
Additional information		The activity was started in the previous action plan; the concept of integrated curricula of social sciences was completed. The development of the curricula began in 2018 and the process of developing the curricula is ongoing. The curriculum has been developed in an inclusive manner and various stakeholders have been consulted in the process.

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[7] https://www.hm.ee/et/opikasitus

Milestone Activity	Start Date:	End Date:
The working group of the field of study prepares and presents primary proposals for the updated learning outcomes.	July 2018	December 2018
Consultations with stakeholders	January 2019	December 2019

5. IMPLEMENTING THE ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan will be implemented as a partnership of state and non-governmental organisations. The implementation of the action plan is coordinated by the OGP Coordinating Council, whose duty is also to make decisions related to the open partnership (e.g. about the activities of the Action Plan) and the broad coverage of the aims and activities of Estonian participation in the OGP.

Pursuant to the decision of the Coordinating Council of 13 February 2018, regular and visualised overviews of the implementation of the action plan are presented on the website of the Government Office. Ongoing monitoring activities are carried out in the course of the activities pursuant to their schedules. The Coordinating Council will meet at least once a year to review the progress of the action plan.

A report on the implementation of the action plan will be prepared once the action plan is completed. During the implementation period of the action plan, an independent reporting mechanism (IRM) will prepare an assessment report on the implementation of the action plan. An interim report is not prepared; this is replaced by regular overviews on the web.

When implementing OGP, the principle of enabling access to disabled persons is continuously adhered to.