Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Georgia Transitional Results Report 2018–2019

This report was prepared in collaboration with Nodar Kherkheulidze, Independent Researcher

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I. Introduction

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

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

This report covers the implementation of Georgia's fourth action plan for 2018-2019. In 2021, the IRM will implement a new approach to its research process and the scope of its reporting on action plans, approved by the IRM Refresh.[1] The IRM adjusted its Implementation Reports for 2018-2020 action plans to fit the transition process to the new IRM products and enable the IRM to adjust its workflow in light of the COVID-19 pandemic's effects on OGP country processes.

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[1] For more information, see: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/process/accountability/about-the-irm/irm-refresh/

II. Action Plan Implementation

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

2.1. General Highlights and Results

Half of the 28 commitments in Georgia's fourth action plan saw either substantial or full implementation at the end of the action plan period.[1] This completion rate was a slight reduction compared to the previous action plan (2016-2018), where 16 out of 24 commitments (67 percent) had at least substantial implementation.[2] Major factors contributing to lower levels of implementation included limited financial and human resources as well as technical difficulties (particularly for those involving updating websites). For some commitments, legislative amendments were not passed on time, while others encountered challenges due to poor planning or coordination. The municipal commitments generally saw higher implementation than average, particularly due to the active engagement and assistance of donor organizations. Out of the five commitments identified in the IRM Design Report as "noteworthy", one was fully completed (Commitment 9), and two (16 and 27) were substantially completed, while two (12 and 13) saw limited implementation.[3] The amendments to the Law of Georgia on Grants were delayed for Commitment 12, while for Commitment 13, the State Procurement Agency experienced technical challenges in improving data on the opendata.spa.ge portal.

Several commitments from municipal self-governments saw promising results. For example, under Commitment 16, eight municipalities developed strategies for transparency and integrity, as well as corresponding action plans, and monitoring frameworks. These strategies mandate the municipal governments to implement several activities around open government, integrity, and participatory practices. Under Commitment 19, Batumi Municipality institutionalized participatory budgeting, resulting in several citizen proposals receiving funding, and scaled up the practice beyond the action plan timeframe. At the national level, Commitments 7 and 9 resulted in improvements to tracking progress on advancement of Sustainable Development Goals and accessing court decisions, respectively.

Lack of ownership of the OGP process also contributed to limited implementation of the action plan. In spring 2019, the national OGP secretariat transferred from the Ministry of Justice to the Administration of Government (AoG), in an effort to revive the OGP process. Civil society stakeholders welcomed the transfer. However, although AoG officially took over coordination in spring 2019, the transfer took longer in practice. In addition, because the transfer took place during the implementation period, the implementing agencies were left without strong oversight from the national secretariat. Finally, the withdrawal of a majority of CSOs from the multi-stakeholder forum in November 2018 (explained in detail in the IRM Design Report[4]) limited the amount of civil society engagement during implementation.

The Open Parliament commitments generally saw high levels of implementation. In contrast to the national process, the Open Parliament commitments saw strong engagement between parliament and civil society during both the co-creation and implementation phases. However, several factors limited the impact on parliamentary transparency and engagement. These included the parliamentary elections in 2020, when political parties had to prioritize the elections over other activities, and the change of the Chairperson of OGP Council due to her departure from the ruling party and her parliamentary position.

2.2. COVID-19 pandemic impact on implementation

The COVID-19 pandemic reached Georgia in March 2020. However, the pandemic did not directly impact implementation of the action plan's commitments in terms of allocation of resources or continuity of activities, as the action plan had already finished in December 2019. Nevertheless, since most commitments were not completed by the end of the action plan period, the pandemic pushed the delayed commitments further from the immediate agenda, as the government and public agencies had to shift their priorities. For example, the Public Service Hall postponed several unfinished tasks under Commitment 2 until 2021, which had already been postponed to 2020.[5]

At the time of writing this report, the pandemic has also affected the development of the fifth action plan. Although the reformed multi-stakeholder forum held its first meeting on 27 December 2019 to

start the co-creation process, AoG soon had to refocus entirely on urgent COVID-19 response tasks and put the process on hold.[6] AoG attempted to resume the process in fall 2020, but a second wave hit Georgia resulting in a strict lockdown, so the process was paused again. According to the point of contact to OGP, no date for resuming the process can be estimated at the moment.[7]

When AoG took over the country's immediate response to the pandemic, it established the Interagency Coordination Council under the prime minister to ensure efficient coordination among public agencies, government, parliament, and medical staff. To ensure the information flow to the public, the Council held daily briefings (broadcasted live), providing information on COVID-19 developments. A dedicated website was launched, which includes statistical data, WHO and National Center for Disease Control recommendations, and an FAQ.[8] The website is available in several common languages in Georgia. Several hotlines were introduced for higher public awareness and prompt management. For example, the Public Safety Management Center added a new hotline specifically for COVID-related information and another for vehicle permits in emergency cases. Finally, a unified government hotline was launched to cover movement permits during curfew. As part of the emergency response, AoG primarily cooperated with state agencies under the Interagency Coordination Council's mandate. Beyond that, AoG conducted a few coordination meetings, mostly informing multilateral organizations and business sector representatives of COVID-related matters in the country.[9]

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[1] OGP, Georgia Action Plan 2018-2019, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/georgia-action-plan-2018-2019/
[2] OGP, IRM Georgia End-of-Term Report 2016-2018, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Georgia_End-of-Term_Report_2016-2018_EN.pdf
[3] Open Government Partnership, IRM Georgia Design Report 2018-2019, https://www.opengovpartnership.org.documents/georgia-design-report-2018-2019/
[4] Ibid.
[5] Administration of the Government of Georgia, Self-Assessment Report, On the Implementation of Open Government Georgia Action Plan 2018-2019, https://ogpgeorgia.gov.ge/upload/pages/26/Final%20Self-Assessment%20Report%20On%20the%20Implementation%20of%20Open%20Government%20Georgia%20Action%20Plan%202020 18-2019.pdf
[6] Ketevan Tsanava, Head of Public Administration Unit at Policy and Coordination Department at Administration of the Government of Georgia, interview with IRM researcher, 31 March 2021.
[7] Ibid.
[8] COVID-19 website, StopCoV.ge, https://stopcov.ge/en/
[9] Government of Georgia, "Measures implemented by the Government of Georgia against Covid-19", 2020, https://stopcov.ge/Content/files/COVID_RESPONSE_REPORT_ENG.pdf

2.3. Early results

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

Section 2.3 focuses on outcomes from the implementation of commitments that had an ambitious or strong design, per the IRM Design Report assessment or that may have lacked clarity and/or ambition but had successful implementation with "major" or "outstanding" changes to government practice.[1] Commitments considered for analysis in this section had at least a "substantial" level of implementation, as assessed by the IRM in Section 2.4.[2] While this section provides the analysis of the IRM's findings for the commitments that meet the criteria described above, Section 2.4 includes an overview of the level of completion for all the commitments in the action plan.

Commitment 9 - Publish court decisions in a unified database and create a retrieval system	
Aim of the commitment	Under this commitment, the Supreme Court of Georgia aimed to upgrade the electronic registry http://info.court.ge so that it functions as a unified registry for the decisions of common courts and the Supreme Court. To do this, the Supreme Court committed to create modules for 1) searching for redacted ("cross-hatched/shaded") court decisions and final documents; 2) publishing and searching for public announcements; 3) creating the litigant's web space; and 4) searching for scheduled sessions.
Did it open government? **Marginal**	The High Council of Justice of Georgia took over this commitment from Supreme Court of Georgia and developed a unified registry of court decisions, integrating decisions from the common and supreme courts under the single online platform ecd.court.ge.[3] It also activated different search modules for easy access to different types of data, such as court decisions and final documents (including decisions redacted due to personal data considerations), public announcements, and the schedule of court sessions. The new platform functions without technical flaws and allows for easier re-use of data, especially for law practitioners who experienced difficulties with the previous system. While the new unified registry consolidates previously dispersed information from the courts into a single platform, the main part of the registry (publishing the decisions of all courts) remains on hold since May 2020 and respective data on court decisions since that date are not available online. This was due to a separate process, independent from this commitment, where the Constitutional Court of Georgia ruled (7 June 2019) that it was unconstitutional to prohibit access to the full text of court decisions delivered within the scope of public hearings.[4] The Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI) had appealed against the Law of Georgia on Personal Data Protection that prohibited access to the full texts of court decisions delivered within the scope of public hearings. IDFI saw this restriction as a significant issue affecting the overall transparency of the judiciary. Accordingly, the courts have put this module of publishing of court decisions with redacted personal information (what the commitment refers to as cross-hatched/shaded decisions) on hold since May 2020, until parliament harmonizes existing legislation with the requirements of the constitution, as ruled by the

	Constitutional Court. Parliament has not adopted appropriate amendments to date.[5]
	While the Constitutional Court's ruling widens access to information contained in court decisions beyond the original scope of this commitment, the absence of transitional measures (as called for by the Court) has effectively halted the ongoing publication of decisions, until these measures are agreed upon in legislation. The system is currently awaiting legal amendments to be adopted by parliament in order to operate fully. This means there has only been a marginal increase in access to information at this time.

Commitment 16: Strengthen transparency and good governance in municipalities	
Aim of the commitment	This commitment aimed to strengthen the resilience of local governments against the threats of corruption by developing strategies and action plans for building integrity and transparency in eight municipalities of Georgia.[6]
Did it open government? **Marginal**	With the support of international partners and development organizations[7] all eight municipalities performed situation analyses, developed strategies for transparency and integrity, as well as corresponding action plans, and monitoring frameworks.[8][9] The process included public hearings and consultations with local stakeholders such as CSOs, municipality personnel, academia, and active citizens.[10][11][12] However, Tskaltubo, Dusheti, and Rustavi Municipalities did not officially adopt their strategic documents by the end of the action plan period.[13] Therefore, the commitment is considered substantially rather than fully implemented.
	Prior to this commitment, none of the selected eight municipalities had developed dedicated official strategies that promoted integrity, transparency, and anti-corruption policies in their municipal governments. The implementation of this commitment at this early stage brought positive changes in anti-corruption practices in the municipalities. Firstly, the fact that the policy documents were elaborated based on the situational analysis of local practices reflecting needs of citizens, brought a considerable experience of transparent and participative policy-making to the municipal governments. Secondly, elaboration of the policy documents raised new issues of transparency and integrity that were previously missing from everyday self-governance practice. Finally, the capacity-building activities for local government personnel helped to raise local competence to better understand the strategic purpose and implement the activities set out in the action plans in most of the municipalities.
	For example, under its new strategy, developed with the support of the UNDP project "Fostering Decentralization and Good Governance at the Local Level in Georgia" (DGG), Khoni Municipality committed to implement activities that triggered a change in municipal service delivery. In 2019, Khoni allocated internal resources and initiated a Citizen Center, along with a new single-window public service delivery.[14] This allowed citizens to receive information and services in one place and from specifically trained personnel, compared to the previous practice in which citizens were forced to wander door-to-door in the Town Hall building for different information and services. Furthermore, in collaboration with a local CSO, the municipality introduced a new hotline service that enables citizens to acquire information on municipal services and procedures remotely, without visiting the Town Hall, that was not available before either via telephone or the official

webpage.[15] CSOs acknowledge this change as a major step forward in access to public service-related information and delivery in Khoni.[16]

Ozurgeti, with the assistance of the USAID Good Governance Institute (GGI), developed a comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation methodology to implement its Transparency and Building Integrity Strategy and Action Plan. The methodology institutionalizes mechanisms for CSOs to engage in the monitoring and assessment process by providing feedback on local government activities under the action plan. The local government now has an obligation to respond to CSOs within the monitoring framework document, which is available publicly.[17] According to USAID GGI, this is the first instance in Georgia in which a Municipality Council institutionalized local civil society involvement in the monitoring of local government action plan and activities.[18]

In Dedoplistkharo, the Council – the representative body - approved the Building Integrity and Transparency Strategy Action Plan along with the monitoring framework. The stakeholders assessed the Council's approval as a good example of establishing a high legitimacy[19] for the implementation of the strategy.

These efforts to start good governance practices led to OGP Local Program membership for Akhaltsikhe, Khoni, and Ozurgeti municipalities in 2020. All three municipalities approved Integrity and Transparency Strategies under this commitment. Joining the OGP Local Program could further open up a unique platform for gaining international visibility, and access to knowledge, resources, and opportunities.

As a result of capturing promising early results, and to further foster transparency and good governance practices, the donor organizations extended the scope of their support to additional municipalities in Georgia. Namely, USAID GGI selected six new municipalities (Gori, Llagodekhi, Senaki, Telavi, Tbilisi, and Zugdidi) to develop and approve Building Integrity and Transparency action plans in 2021-2022.[20]

Commitment 19 - Institutionalize participatory budgeting in Batumi City	
Aim of the commitment	Under this commitment, Batumi Municipality aimed to institutionalize participatory mechanisms in its budget process. Specifically, Batumi planned to create district unions in all 14 city districts to better organize its awareness-raising activities, provide trainings, and promote participation and its idea.batumi.ge web portal. Also, Batumi planned to develop a legislative framework to define rules and procedures for participation, selection of ideas, voting, and obligations of the municipal government.
Did it open government? **Major**	This commitment was fully completed by the end of the action plan. To institutionalize the legislative framework for participatory budgeting in the 2019 fiscal year, Batumi Municipality, with the support of USAID GGI, elaborated the rules and procedures, allocated 120,000 GEL for citizen initiatives, and issued the Mayor's decree of February 2019 with a step-by-step description of the participatory budgeting process.[21] Next, the municipality created district unions in all 14 districts of the city and trained union members to better promote participatory mechanisms within the districts. Finally, USAID GGI contracted the Civil Society Institute (CSI) to help conduct 12 awareness-raising meetings,

	distribute awareness-raising materials (flyers, posters, and branded pens), develop social media pages on Facebook[22] and Instagram[23], and organize TV and radio broadcasts to promote citizen participation mechanisms, including idea.batumi.ge.[24]

As a result of this commitment, 35 ideas from citizens were generated through idea.batumi.ge during the 2019 fiscal year. Following the new procedures, the City Advisory Council selected 10 initiatives of the 35 according to the predetermined criteria and used the idea.batumi.ge platform for public voting. At the final stage, more than 2,000 citizens participated in the voting process and selected three winners of the 10 initiatives. The selected initiatives included 1) organizing a Kite Festival in 28-29 July 2019; 2) installing a Wish Tree in the tourist area; and 3) installing a "Batumi" welcome sign on Batumi Hill. All three initiatives aimed at fostering the potential of Batumi as an attractive destination for tourists and visitors.[25]

Following these promising results in 2019 and growing interest among citizens, Batumi Municipality scaled up the participatory budgeting in 2020. This involved increasing the allocated budget for citizen initiatives from 120, 000 GEL in 2019 to 500,000 GEL in 2020, as well as increasing the number of citizen proposals to be selected for funding. Also, with the support of USAID GGI, Batumi Municipality revised the rules and procedures.[26] In 2020, 53 proposals were submitted through idea.batumi.ge and eight projects were selected by citizens for implementation in the 2021 fiscal year (up from three the previous year).[27] Some of the selected initiatives were: 1) organic waste composting that envisages installing 100 dumpsters around the city to collect wasted fruits and vegetables and process into fertilizers for use by local farmers; 2) Batumi Velo-City that implies installing bicycle stops and maintenance toolboxes around the city; and 3) Colorful Yards for Children aimed at painting the yards of existing apartment buildings with colorful and entertaining pictures to attract children to play outdoors.

By introducing and institutionalizing participatory budgeting through the idea.batumi.ge portal, Batumi has offered opportunities for citizens to engage and influence the city budget that were not available before the action plan. Following the successful implementation of citizen initiatives in 2020, Batumi increased the allocated budget by four times and almost tripled the number of initiatives to be implemented in 2021 (from three to eight). This scaling-up of funded proposals, as well as the development of comprehensive rules and procedures for participatory budgeting, demonstrates that the commitment exceeded its ambition as presented in the action plan. Despite these favorable early results and enhanced public participation in the budgetary processes in 2020, Batumi still considers low awareness a key challenge, and acknowledges the high importance of promoting participatory budgeting mechanisms and their potential benefits to the wider public.[28] |

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[1] IRM Design Reports identified strong commitments as "**noteworthy commitments**" if they were assessed as verifiable, relevant, and "transformative" potential impact. If no commitments met the potential impact threshold, the IRM selected noteworthy commitments from the commitments with "moderate" potential impact. For the list of Georgia's noteworthy commitments, see the Executive Summary of the 2018-2020 IRM Design Report: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Georgia_Design-Report_2018-2019_EN.pdf

[2] The following commitments assessed as noteworthy in Georgia's IRM Design Report are not included in this section because their limited implementation means there is not enough progress to assess results:
- Commitment 12: Increase transparency of the public grant-funding system
- Commitment 13: Electronic innovations for more transparency and efficiency of public procurement

[3] Before this commitment, no unified registry of court decisions existed, and the decisions of common courts (first and second instances) were published at http://info.court.ge, while the Supreme Court published its decisions on its webpage, see Open Government Partnership, IRM Georgia Design Report 2018-2019, https://www.opengovpartnership.org.documents/georgia-design-report-2018-2019/

[4] Davit Maisuradze, Open Governance Direction Head at Institute for Development of Freedom of Information, interview with IRM researcher, 30 November 2020.

[5] IDFI, IDFI's Statement on Access to Court Decisions, September 2010, https://idfi.ge/en/idfis_statement_on_access_to_court_decisions

[6] The eight municipalities are 1) Akhaltsikhe, 2) Dedoplistskharo, 3) Khoni, 4) Ozurgeti, 5) Rustavi, 6), Tskaltubo, 7) Dusheti, and 8) Bolnisi.

[7] UNDP (Khoni, Rustavi, Tskhaltubo, Dusheti, Bolnisi), USAID GGI (Akhaltsikhe, Ozurgeti), and GIZ (Dedoplistksharo). USAID GGI contracted IDFI to develop the transparency and integrity strategies, action plans, and monitoring mechanisms for Akhaltsikhe.

[8] Transparency and Building Integrity Strategy, Ozurgeti, available here

[9] Transparency and Building Integrity Strategy and Action Plan, Akhaltsikhe, https://www.akhaltsikhe.ge/ge/strategiakoncepciagegma

[10] Mariam Gorgadze, Deputy Chief of Party and Mikheil Darchiashvili, Governance Manager at USAID Georgia Good Governance Initiative, interview with IRM researcher, 19 November 2020.

[11] Nino Kakubava, Project Manager, and Giorgi Nasrashvili, Good Governance Expert, at UNDP project: Fostering Decentralization and Good Governance at the Local Level in Georgia, interview with IRM researcher, 26 November 2020.

[12] Rusudan Abulashvili, Adviser at Good Governance for Local Development South Caucasus, GIZ, interview with IRM researcher, 24 November 2020.

[13] Administration of the Government of Georgia, Self-Assessment Report, On the Implementation of Open Government Georgia Action Plan 2018-2019, https://ogpgeorgia.gov.ge/upload/pages/26/Final%20Self-Assessment%20Report%20On%20the%20Implementation%20of%20Open%20Government%20Georgia%20Action%20Plan%202018-2019.pdf

[14] Nino Kakubava, Project Manager, and Giorgi Nasrashvili, Good Governance Expert, at UNDP project: Fostering Decentralization and Good Governance at the Local Level in Georgia, interview with IRM researcher, 26 November 2020.

[15] Khoni Transparency and Building Integrity Strategy and Action Plan, 2019-2022

[16] Nino Kakubava, Project Manager, and Giorgi Nasrashvili, Good Governance Expert, at UNDP project: Fostering Decentralization and Good Governance at the Local Level in Georgia, interview with IRM researcher, 26 November 2020.

[17] Monitoring and Self-Assessment Methodology for Ozurgeti Transparency and Building Integrity Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2022, ozurgeti.mun.gov.ge/?p=3868

[18] Mariam Gorgadze, Deputy Chief of Party and Mikheil Darchiashvili, Governance Manager at USAID Georgia Good Governance Initiative, interview with IRM researcher, 19 November 2020.

[19] Rusudan Abulashvili, Adviser at Good Governance for Local Development South Caucasus, GIZ, interview with IRM researcher, 24 November 2020.

[20] Mariam Gorgadze, Deputy Chief of Party and Mikheil Darchiashvili, Governance Manager at USAID Georgia Good Governance Initiative, interview with IRM researcher, 19 November 2020. All municipalities formally adopted strategies and action plans in 2020. USAID GGI supported Tbilisi City Hall in developing its Building Integrity and Transparency Strategy, action plan and monitoring framework as envisaged by Tbilisi's second OGP action plan (2018-2020): https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Tbilisi_Action-Plan_2018-2020.pdf. In 2021, USAID GGI selected five additional municipalities (Akhmeta, Ambrolauri, Batumi, Lanchkhuti, and Tsageri) to develop Building Integrity and Transparency Strategies, action plans and monitoring frameworks. UNDP DGG also intends to extend its support to five additional municipalities in developing the same strategic documents from 2021-2022.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Idea Batumi official Facebook page, https://www.facebook.com/idea.batumi.ge

[23] Idea Batumi official Instagram page, https://www.instagram.com/idea.batumi.ge

[24] Open Government Georgia, Georgia Status Report on Implementation of the action plan for 2018-2019, https://ogpgeorgia.gov.ge/en/monitoring-and-evaluation/

[25] www.idea.batumi.ge; Mikheil Darchiashvili, Governance Manager at USAID Georgia Good Governance Initiative, email exchange with IRM researcher, 13 January 2020.

[26] In addition, USAID GGI (through its local contractor - CSI) supported Batumi City Hall to carry out a robust promotional campaign and provided coaching for the City Hall staff to effectively evaluate viability and adequacy of project proposals. (Information provided to the IRM by USAID GGI during the pre-publication review of this report, 27 April 2021.)

[27] Ibid.

[28] Open Government Georgia, Georgia Status Report on Implementation of the action plan for 2018-2019, https://ogpgeorgia.gov.ge/en/monitoring-and-evaluation/

2.4. Commitment implementation

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

Commitment	Completion
	(no evidence available, not started, limited, substantial or complete)
Theme 1: Improving Public Services	
1. Improve public services for all	**Complete** In consultation with persons with disabilities (PWDs) and experts, the Public Service Hall (PSH) developed a needs assessment, standard tutorial for service delivery for PWDs,[1] and a sign-language terminology guide incorporating around 400 signs.[2] PSH trained 750 of its staff under the new guidelines. Furthermore, 20 PSH personnel have learned sign language to deliver services to PWDs. The post-test results showed that 94 percent of PSH staff improved knowledge of specifics of providing services to PWDs.[3] PSH prepared print and audio materials on adapted services, which it circulated among PSH personnel and partner organizations through social media and its official webpage as part of its awareness-raising campaign.[4]
2. Innovative platform for citizen engagement	**Limited** The Public Service Hall (PSH) prepared the concept for the integration of new electronic services to its webpage. However, the process was delayed and none of the milestones were completed within the action plan timeframe.[5] According to the government point of contact, a lack of funding inhibited the implementation of this commitment.[6]
3. Increase access to public services through introduction of Unified Authentication System (UAS)	**Limited** The Public Service Development Agency (PSDA) launched the UAS in December 2018. However, due to technical incompliances, PSDA temporarily removed the system in 2019. PSDA did not develop legislative amendments within the action plan's timeframe due to the complex process of harmonization of the national legislation with EU law, that required additional time, human, and financial resources.[7]
4. Innovative platform for economic governance	**Limited** The Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development (MoESD) created a new portal ([you.gov.ge)](you.gov.ge) that brings together information on ongoing and planned activities by MoESD and its subordinate legal entities. The platform also includes features for initiating, voting, and prioritizing aspects of economic reforms. However, as of November 2020, the portal is still a pilot version. According to CSOs' input in the monitoring framework, the new platform has several technical issues that limit its wider usability and accessibility. In particular, major functions such as voting and initiating are only available to registered users, even though the registration function does not work. It also does not display the dates for information, so it is unclear if the information is updated regularly. It also does not include a share function.

	MoESD did not conduct any awareness raising to promote the new portal.
5. Activate electronic portal for meeting the environmental assessment code requirements	**Limited** The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (MEPA) developed a concept and plan to create a new portal on its existing webpage, [mepa.gov.ge with its own address/domain](). MEPA finished some of the preparatory work for the internal system and public portal, such as identifying contents and structure and uploading the documents to test in the internal system, However, it is still finalizing the system, which will be available publicly after the end of the action plan period (tentatively by July 2021).[8]
Theme II: Increasing Public Integrity	
6. Strengthen the existing major anti-corruption institution	**Limited** The Secretariat of the Anti-Corruption Council (ACC) prepared the Corruption Risk Assessment Methodology with the support of the EU technical assistance project "Support to Public Administration Reform in Georgia". The methodology was based on "internationally acclaimed best practice: Corruption Risk Assessment Standards"[9] utilized by international organizations such as OECD, the UN, and the EU. In December 2019, ACC officially approved the methodology.[10] Various agencies conducted short trainings for persons engaged in investigating corruption and criminal prosecution. 16 prosecutors and investigators, 18 employees of the State Security Service, and 23 interns were trained.[11] According to civil society stakeholders,[12] the scale of the trainings was limited because the number of trained personnel and interns was insufficient, and the trainings did not respond to existing corruption challenges. ACC did not perform the corruption risk assessments based on the new methodology or institutionalize annual reporting to parliament within the action plan timeframe. Accordingly, civil society stakeholders unanimously assessed this commitment as limited in both completion and impact.[13]
7. Public monitoring of sustainable development goals (SDGs)	**Complete** AoG launched both the internal and external interfaces of the SDG Tracker, available at [sdg.gov.ge,]() in December 2019. The tracker includes performances of public agencies in implementing national SDG targets. AoG partnered with Geostat to determine the baseline indicators for each SDG-aligned national target. In 2018, AoG also conducted personnel trainings on the internal government system and an awareness-raising campaign for the public interface with participation of business, academia, and other interested parties.[14] Thus, this commitment was fully completed. Unlike the previous practice of collecting SDG data manually, the new system allows the government to collect aggregated data and reporting from responsible agencies. The new system also allows the government to integrate the aggregated data and make it available publicly. Users can select between different indicators and attributes, such as age and gender, and observe the data visualization diagram changes in real-time. This helps interested groups easily find baseline indicators for each SDG (both global and national), compare indicators for different SDGs, and monitor the progress towards SDG-related national targets.

	Civil society stakeholders assessed the new tracker as a positive step toward proactive publishing of consolidated data on Georgia's progress toward the SDGs that was not available before. However, they emphasized several shortcomings in the tracker's functionality and utility.[15] For example, there are some inconsistencies such as the "download" function not working, as well as missing baselines for some of the SDG indicators and targets, which reduce the reliability of the available data and limit the capacity of users to track progress.[16] They also noted the need for wider public awareness of the platform to further realize the potential benefits of public monitoring.
8. Develop legislative acts based on citizen engagement and data analysis	**Complete** In June 2019, parliament approved legislative amendments that require the use of the Unified Regulatory Impact Assessment and Monitoring System (RIA) for certain types of bills defined in the Law of Georgia on Normative Acts.[17] Specifically, the mandatory use of RIA is limited to bills that are either government initiatives and/or activities that are part of government legislative plans. The Government of Georgia (GoG) also approved an RIA methodology (developed with support from USAID GGI) that defines the major RIA principles, steps, and minimum requirements, and lists of laws that require mandatory RIA in case of amendments.[18]
9. Publish court decisions in a unified database and create a retrieval system	**Complete** For details regarding the implementation and early results of this commitment, see Section 2.3.
10. Increase the transparency of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)	**Limited** The MIA approved the data collection standard procedures with Minister's Ordinance #1/39 and now publishes statistical data of citizens' complaints in its annual reports and inspection results on its webpage (info.police.ge).[19] However, the information is limited to quantitative data and does not provide narrative reasoning or analysis as to why citizens' complaints are denied or facts of disciplinary wrongdoings. According to the OGP National Action Plan Monitoring Framework, the MIA also performed a needs analysis for procedural changes for promotion and demotion. However, it did not identify a need for substantial procedural changes, apart from minor changes such as self-initiation and mandatory pre-testing for promotion.[20]
Theme III: More Effectively Managing Public Resources	
11. Increase citizen participation in oversight of public finance	**Substantial** The State Audit Office (SAO) developed (with support from USAID GGI) a pilot version of a new feature on budgetmonitor.ge allowing citizens to submit feedback and track their feedback's status.[21] SAO plans to launch the new feedback feature along with the updated version of the entire budgetmonitor.ge platform by summer 2021, since the current version of the platform does not support the feature.[22]

	As part of the awareness-raising campaign, SAO conducted eight meetings with parliament, media, civil society, and academia to promote budgetmonitor.ge.[23]
12. Increase transparency of public grant funding system	**Limited** The Administration of Government, in cooperation with the Civil Society Institute (CSI) prepared the first draft package of amendments to the Law of Georgia on Grants. However, due to the number of different laws that needed to be amended and the number of stakeholders involved (the Ministry of Finance, the Public Procurement Agency, the Ministry of Regional and Infrastructure of Georgia), the process was prolonged, and the bill was not finalized by the end of the action plan.[24]
13. Electronic innovations for more transparency and efficiency of public procurement	**Limited** The State Procurement Agency (SPA) developed and integrated the electronic procurement data and annual procurement plans into the opendata.spa.ge portal and made the data in these modules available in open data format. After an initial delay, SPA launched the application programming interface (API) in June 2019 at odapi.spa.ge. However, the information published on both new modules and the API website only covered historical data to the first quarter of 2019 at the end of the action plan period (December 2019).[25] Although the systems now aligns with the Open Contracting Data Standard, SPA experienced technical challenges in publishing detailed Common Procurement Vocabulary (CPV) codes that would allow for better filtering and deeper analysis.[26] SPA continued to collaborate with the Ministry of Finance and other counterparts to resolve these issues.[27] At the end of the implementation period (December 2019), the lack of historical data, detailed CPV codes, and filtering remain major complaints among civil society stakeholders[28] who have assessed the opendata.spa.ge platform as not reliable and of little practical use.[29]
Theme IV: Creating Safer Communities	
14. Develop housing document and action plan	**Limited** In April 2019, an interagency council for homelessness was created under the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health, and Social Affairs of Georgia.[30] The council is supported by USAID GGI and operates along with the working group that consists of state agencies, CSOs, and field experts. However, the council did not develop the housing policy. According to USAID GGI[31] and the government point of contact,[32] the housing policy was temporarily put on hold due to other priorities in the political agenda. Open Society Georgia Foundation, who initiated this commitment, also assessed the work of the council as "ineffective".[33]
Theme V: Increasing Corporate Accountability	

15. Openness and accountability of state-owned enterprises	**Limited**
	The National Agency of State Property (NASP) developed a data collection methodology and a standard template[34] consisting of detailed information for the 100 percent state-owned enterprises (SOEs), available on nasp.gov.ge. While the updated list of SOEs is available online,[35] detailed information of SOEs is only available for 2017[36] and 2018.[37] According to NASP, the updated information will be available along with the updated website tentatively in 2021.[38]
	While NASP started developing the corporate management guide, it was not finalized within the action plan timeframe.[39]

Theme VI: Municipalities	
16. Strengthen transparency and good governance in municipalities	**Substantial**
	For details regarding the implementation and early results of this commitment, see Section 2.3.
17. Improve the open data collection and publishing process in Akhaltsikhe and Kutaisi municipalities	**Complete**
	Both Akhaltsikhe and Kutaisi Municipalities developed and approved their open data strategies (2019-2020) and monitoring frameworks. USAID GGI contracted the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI) for this commitment.[40] IDFI carried out comprehensive analyses for both municipalities and met with stakeholders such as City Hall representatives, CSOs, and media to identify local needs. Based on the findings, IDFI developed initial drafts of the strategies tailored to local needs. As a next step, IDFI organized public consultations on the drafts and reflected the feedback in the final documents.[41] IDFI trained relevant municipal personnel on how to collect, process, and publish information in open data format.[42] Lastly, IDFI developed an Open Data Guidebook for civil servants[43] that provides practical solutions and examples for data collection, processing, analysis, and visualization.
	This commitment served as a key starting point to raising the understanding of open data in these self-governments and develop unified standards for collecting and publishing public information in open format. Both municipalities revised their procedures for proactively publishing public information and defined default open formats such as CSV and XML as the primary format for publication. The municipalities also specified responsible units for exchanging data between their departments and archiving information. Both municipalities published their budgets for the 2019, 2020, 2021 fiscal years for the first time in open data format, unlike the previous practice when budgets were published as PDFs. According to stakeholders, this has allowed local CSOs to better monitor the budgetary and spending processes.[44] Both municipalities plan to identify additional government information to publish in open format and promote its use among CSOs and the private sector.[45]
	Based on the positive experiences from Akhaltsikhe and Kutaisi, in 2020, USAID GGI and IDFI supported six new municipalities (Gori, Lagodekhi, Ozurgeti, Senaki, Telavi, and Zugdidi) in conducting situational analyses of open data management practices and provided open data trainings for the employees of these municipalities. Capacity building activities will continue in 2021.[46]

18. Participation of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in the political and social life of Akhaltsikhe and Kutaisi municipalities	**Limited**
	Supported by USAID GGI, both municipalities performed infrastructural analyses of their administrative buildings, but only Akhaltsikhe developed terms of reference (ToR). Kutaisi did not take further steps, as its administration decided to move to an entirely new building with infrastructure already adapted to PWDs. In Akhaltsikhe, USAID GGI contracted an external expert who delivered the ToRs and the budget, but Akhaltsikhe has not started to implement its ToR.[47]
	Kutaisi City Hall's 2021 municipal budget includes a program that provides for proper infrastructure of municipal administrative buildings for PWDs. Also, ramps will be arranged in Kutaisi, and adapted for PWDs.[48]
19. Introduce institutionalized participatory budgeting in Batumi City	**Complete**
	For details regarding the implementation and early results of this commitment, see Section 2.3.
20. Your idea for Zugdidi Mayor	**Not Started**
	By the end of the action plan period, Zugdidi Municipality had not started developing the "Your Idea to the Zugdidi Mayor" portal. According to the municipality's Public Relations Department representative,[49] Zugdidi Municipality did not consider it necessary to start the project because the Municipal Services Development Agency (MSDA) already planned to introduce a similar portal under a separate project. MSDA launched the new portal idea.municipal.gov.ge in November 2020, where users can choose Zugdidi, and submit their ideas to the municipality.
21. Introduce electronic services in Batumi and Rustavi municipalities	**Limited**
	According to the monitoring framework[50] Batumi has introduced electronic modules for participatory budgeting; e-petitions; spatial arrangements and architectures; property management; and healthcare and social welfare. However, all the modules apart from participatory budgeting are limited to publishing statistical data about services, rather than providing services electronically. With the support of USAID GGI, Batumi also conducted business analytics to study all the service-related processes in the city and developed a strategy including recommendations on how to improve 200 local services.
	Rustavi has introduced electronic modules for healthcare and social welfare as well as spatial arrangement and architecture, integrated into the MMS system. However, Rustavi experienced technical and financial challenges during the implementation process and put the commitment on hold.[51] In October 2020, the Municipal Services Development Agency (MSDA) took over the project and developed the new platform ms.gov.ge, in which services of social welfare and healthcare, spatial arrangement and agriculture, and property management are available. The municipality also started e-petitions and participatory budgeting in 2020 on its official webpage rustavi.gov.ge.[52] [53]
22. I.Gov.Zugdidi	**Substantial**
	Zugdidi Municipality launched the mobile application I.Gov.Zugdidi which provides information on the municipal calendar, programs, services, and

	tourist locations.[54] The application includes a "contact" field but lacks a dedicated feedback mechanism.
	Zugdidi Municipality also conducted awareness-raising campaigns (through social media, face-to-face meetings, and its official webpage) to spread information on the new application among local people.[55]
23. System to assess services and citizens' satisfaction in Ozurgeti Municipality	**Complete** Ozurgeti Municipality, in partnership with local NGOs, developed a service monitoring methodology and involved youth in the data collation process.[56] The municipality conducted information meetings in the five local high schools, and trained 25 students in interviewing and data collection. The working group prepared an assessment report that reflected on the service delivery practice. In the "Self-government for education initiative," Ozurgeti Municipality and Assembly, in cooperation with local NGOs[57] and the Parliamentary Library, organized 25 awareness-raising meetings with around 400 participants to promote self-governance and participation mechanisms among the municipal population. Also, a new e-repository of self-governance resources (textbooks, documents, reports) was published on the website of the National Parliamentary Library.[58]
Open Parliament	
24. Monitor the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the Parliament of Georgia	**Substantial** With the support from the Swedish government and UNDP, Parliament developed and approved the Parliamentary Strategy for Monitoring and Implementation of SDGs for 2019-2030 and the respective Action Plan for 2019-2020.[59] The strategy defines SDGs monitoring and implementation mechanisms in four dimensions (lawmaking, budgetary, oversight, and civic engagement), while the Action Plan includes activities for 2019-2020. Parliament has already completed 60% of the activities under the Action Plan.[60] These activities included informing all parliamentary committees about the need to become involved in implementing the Action Plan and creating and training a working group on the role of parliament in implementing SDGs. However, most of the actual parliamentary monitoring of SDGs remains to be achieved, such as requiring parliament to assess the compatibility of laws with SDG goals during the preparation of laws and piloting this monitoring in some committees.
25. Increase involvement in the elaboration and approval of the budget	**Limited** With the support of GIZ, parliament drafted the public participation policy document and guidelines. However, according to parliament's self-assessment report, the document was not finalized or shared with CSOs within the action plan timeframe.[61] Parliament also developed an online infographic to be integrated on its new webpage (once the webpage is ready), which will present budget-related information in a user-friendly interactive interface (in English and in Georgian).[62] The Budget and Finance Committee reviewed the Ministry of Finance's report on the ministry's activities on civic participation in budgetary processes. While parliament aimed to conduct public consultations on the Basic Data and Directions (BDD) document and the Budget Bill, it only organized informational meetings with students on budgetary processes and committee function.[63] [64] These information meetings, however, cannot be

	assessed as fulfilling this activity according to the OGP action plan, which called for broad consultation with CSOs. According to parliament's self-assessment report, the Budget and Finance Committee also prepared a report on civic participation in the budgetary processes.[65] The report was published on parliament's webpage after the end date of the action plan implementation period.
26. Strengthen effectiveness and transparency of the parliament by implementing innovative technologies	**Substantial** With the support of USAID GGI, parliament developed a new webpage, but had not launched it publicly by the end of the action plan period due to technical issues connected to the large amount of data that needed to be migrated from the previous version.[66] Parliament planned to launch the new webpage by February 2021 (after the official action plan period), but the launch was pushed back to 27 May 2021 due to the technical streamlining process. At the time of writing this report, the new webpage was not publicly available.[67] Parliament completed most of the activities for this commitment. For example, it developed a new section for publishing information on its oversight activities and amended the chairman's decree that allows publishing plenary session stenographic records in open data format. It also prepared new modules for a live online chat function[68] and an online registration to attend committee hearings, and improved the search function for bills with accelerated passage. However, although technically completed, these improvements will be available for citizens only after the launch of the parliament's new webpage on 27 May 2021 (after the end date of the action plan implementation period and after the writing of this report). Parliament fully completed the other milestones, including adopting a unified format for parliamentary committee reports, developing a registry of stakeholders and a registry of lobbyist organizations, and proactively disclosing reports submitted by entities that are accountable to parliament prior to committee hearings. As the new webpage was not yet launched at the time of writing this report, this information was only available on the current parliamentary webpage. Lastly, parliament also developed a new version of its mobile application for both Google and Apple platforms. The application provides regularly updated information on parliamentary activities.[69] The milestones that entailed elaborating online forms for draft laws and developing electronic maps for majoritarian MP Bureaus were not started.
27. Create a Citizen Engagement Center in the Parliament of Georgia	**Substantial** According to parliament's self-assessment report, parliament finalized the infrastructural work for the Citizen Engagement Center. This included allocating and renovating the space for the center, purchasing office equipment, and conducting two trainings for staff.[70] The cornerstone of the new idea was to develop the Concept Document that would define the specific services of the new Citizen Engagement Center. GIZ's Eastern Partnership Parliamentary Project and Legal Program partnered with external experts, the Open Governance Permanent Parliamentary Council working group, and other parliamentary departments to develop the first draft of the concept in December 2019. However, parliament declined the first draft due

	to its "incompatibility with the specific needs of Parliament".[71] This resulted in a considerable delay to this commitment's implementation in its initial form and in the action plan timeframes.[72]
	Separate from this commitment, parliament approved a different inhouse concept in November 2019 that included major activities for 2020.[73] The concept lists the responsibilities of various structural units to support citizen engagement, such as Citizen Reception Center, the Public Relations Department, and the Parliamentary Training Center. However, it does not create a dedicated structural unit and does not introduce an entirely new approach for engagement of citizens in parliamentary activities as envisaged under the commitment.[74]
	Based on a stakeholders' assessment, the center does not meet the initial goal of the commitment to establish a new center for citizen engagement.[75] The commitment entailed two phases: redesigning the Citizen Reception Center and establishing a Citizen Engagement Center. Although the first phase was implemented, by redesigning and reequipping the Citizen Reception Center, the more crucial second phase to establish a Citizen Engagement Center remains unfulfilled.[76]
28. Raise public awareness about parliamentary democracy	**Limited**
	With support from the EU and UNDP and in cooperation with the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI), Parliament developed the Open Governance Permanent Parliamentary Council Communication strategy and Action Plan for 2019-2020, along with a "Social Media Communication Strategy".[77] These documents were approved in 2019.[78]
	Parliament held five informational meetings with students and youth organizations, but the frequency of TV and radio broadcasting for committee hearings was not determined and information on available parliamentary services (including materials adapted to people with special needs) was still in the planning stage in 2019. Parliament reported that, in 2020, it carried out awareness raising by preparing booklets with information on the Citizens Reception Center, online services of parliament, "parliament available for all" (including for people with special needs), and tours of parliament.[79]
	While parliament collected statistical data to identify the most active citizens in the country, it has not published this information. Furthermore, parliament has not yet introduced the planned Active Citizen Award for the most actively involved citizens in parliamentary activities.[80]

[1] PWDs standard guideline for service delivery, PSH, 2018, psh.gove.ge/res/editor/Sajaroinformacia/samartlebrivi_aqtebi/momsaxurebis_xarisxis_standarti.15.01.2019.pdf

[2] Service-related sign-language terminology dictionary, PSH, http://psh.gov.ge/main/page/536/550

[3] Open Government Georgia, Georgia Status Report on Implementation of the action plan for 2018-2019, https://ogpgeorgia.gov.ge/en/monitoring-and-evaluation/

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ketevan Tsanava, Head of Public Administration Unit at Policy and Coordination Department at Administration of the Government of Georgia, interview with IRM researcher, 25 November 2020.

[7] Open Government Georgia, Georgia Status Report on Implementation of the action plan for 2018-2019, https://ogpgeorgia.gov.ge/en/monitoring-and-evaluation/

[8] Ekaterine Bendeliani, Deputy Director at Environmental Information and Education Centre, interview with IRM researcher, 3 February 2021.

[9] Corruption Risk Assessment Methodology, Ministry of Justice, https://justice.gov.ge/Multimedia%2FFiles%2Ftamar_tomaradze%2FCorruption%20Risk%20Assessment%20Methodology..pdf

[10] Ibid.

[11] Open Government Georgia, Georgia Status Report on Implementation of the action plan for 2018-2019, https://ogpgeorgia.gov.ge/en/monitoring-and-evaluation/

[12] Davit Maisuradze, Open Governance Direction Head at Institute for Development of Freedom of Information, interview with IRM researcher, 30 November 2020. Giorgi Topuria, Senior Analyst at Transparency International-Georgia, interview with IRM researcher, 26 November 2020.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Open Government Georgia, Georgia Status Report on Implementation of the action plan for 2018-2019, https://ogpgeorgia.gov.ge/en/monitoring-and-evaluation/

[15] Davit Maisuradze, Open Governance Direction Head at Institute for Development of Freedom of Information, interview with IRM researcher, 30 November 2020.

[16] According to the Policy Planning Division of the Administration of Government, as of May 2021, developers are working to resolve these technical issues. In addition, the tracker has classified the SDG indicators into three tiers based on global indicators. For SDGs that do not have global indicators, there are no corresponding data on AoG's tracker. (Information provided to the IRM by the Policy Planning Division of the Administration of Government during the pre-publication review of this report, 7 May 2021).

[17] Law of Georgia on Normative Acts, https://matsne.gov.ge/document/view/90052?publication=33

[18] Ordinance of the Government of Georgia, On the Approval of Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) Methodology, https://wwwmatsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4776100?publication=0

[19] Ministry of Internal Affairs annual reports, available here. Sine the reporting period, there is a new Ordinance N1/271 adopted on 9 July 2020 that regulates the same procedures, however indication of the Ordinance #1/39 is correct for the reporting period.

[20] Open Government Georgia, Georgia Status Report on Implementation of the action plan for 2018-2019, https://ogpgeorgia.gov.ge/en/monitoring-and-evaluation/

[21] Ibid.

[22] Tsotne Karkashadze, Head of the State Budget and Strategic Analysis Department at State Audit Office, interview with IRM researcher, 2 February 2021.

[23] Open Government Georgia, Georgia Status Report on Implementation of the action plan for 2018-2019, https://ogpgeorgia.gov.ge/en/monitoring-and-evaluation/

[24] Mariam Lelashvili, Representative of Administration of the Government of Georgia, interview with IRM researcher, 4 February 2021.

[25] Since the end of the implementation period, SPA has published historical data from 2011 to the first quarter of 2019.

[26] According to SPA, the provision of detailed CPV codes is a responsibility of the Contracting Authorities and is possible in the e-Procurement system. (Information provided to the IRM by SPA during the pre-publication review of this report, 7 May 2021.

[27] Open Government Georgia, Georgia Status Report on Implementation of the action plan for 2018-2019, https://ogpgeorgia.gov.ge/en/monitoring-and-evaluation/

[28] Giorgi Topuria, Senior Analyst at Transparency International- Georgia, interview with IRM researcher, 26 November 2020.

[29] Davit Maisuradze, Open Governance Direction Head at Institute for Development of Freedom of Information, interview with IRM researcher, 30 November 2020.

[30] Ordinance of the Government of Georgia, April 2019, https://www.matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4536598?publication=0

[31] Mariam Gorgadze, Deputy Chief of Party and Mikheil Darchiashvili, Governance Manager at USAID Georgia Good Governance Initiative, interview with IRM researcher, 19 November 2020.

[32] Ketevan Tsanava, Head of Public Administration Unit at Policy and Coordination Department at Administration of the Government of Georgia, interview with IRM researcher, 25 November 2020.

[33] Open Society Georgia Foundation, "OGP commitment – developing housing policy and action plan- has not completed", 2021, https://osgf.ge/sackhovrisis-politikis-dokumentisa-da-samoqmedo-gegmis-shemushavebis-valdebuleba-ar-shesrulda/

[34] National Agency of State Property, Data collection template form, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1smWPPCM7Yzh7xoupJkwf1Q48ZYYzGeFi/view

[35] National Agency of State Property, List of State-Owned Enterprises, https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3vgM3lEWoh4OUhYb25GQnJZTU0/view

[36] National Agency of State Property, detailed information about enterprises, 2017, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dJd73bElRoE0-9ltLPzP2jBxMD1mezfi/view

[37] National Agency of State Property, detailed information about enterprises, 2018, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1f-oheNVyAxufVBAO7Q2F1xJIVwJX70nl/view

[38] Online consultation with the representation of National Agency of State Property, 27 November 2020.

[39] Open Government Georgia, Georgia Status Report on Implementation of the action plan for 2018-2019, https://ogpgeorgia.gov.ge/en/monitoring-and-evaluation/

[40] Develop Open Data Strategies and Action Plans for Kutaisi and Akhaltsikhe City Halls (2019-2020), https://idfi.ge/en/develop_open_data_strategies_and_action_plans

[41] Gorgadze and Darchiashvili interview, November 2020.

[42] Open Government Georgia, Georgia Status Report on Implementation of the action plan for 2018-2019, https://ogpgeorgia.gov.ge/en/monitoring-and-evaluation/

[43] IDFI, Open Data Guidebook for Civil, https://idfi.ge/en/open_data_guidebook_for_civil_servants_

[44] Mikheil Darchiashvili, Governance Manager at USAID Georgia Good Governance Initiative, interview with IRM researcher, 12 January 2020.

45 Mikheil Darchiashvili, Governance Manager at USAID Georgia Good Governance Initiative, interview with IRM researcher, 12 January 2020.

46 Mikheil Darchiashvili, Governance Manager at USAID Georgia Good Governance Initiative, interview with IRM researcher, 12 January 2020. In addition, USAID GGI created and shared an Open Data Guidebook tailored to the needs of the municipalities. USAID GGI also supports the development of Tbilisi City Hall's open data portal.

47 Gorgadze and Darchiashvili interview, November 2020.

48 Information provided to the IRM by Kutaisi City Hall during the pre-publication review of this report, 28 April 2021.

49 Magdalina Todua, Head of Public Relations Department at Zugdidi City Hall, interview with IRM researcher, 19 November 2020.

50 Open Government Georgia, Georgia Status Report on Implementation of the action plan for 2018-2019, https://ogpgeorgia.gov.ge/en/monitoring-and-evaluation/

51 Ibid. In order to address the technical challenges experienced by Rustavi Municipality in terms of establishing and developing e-services, UNDP DGG transferred specialized technical equipment to the municipality. (Information provided by Giorgi Nasrashvili during the pre-publication review of this report, 6 May 2021.)

52 Ibid.

53 Revaz Barbkadze, Assistant of Mayor, The City Hall of Rustavi Municipality, interview with IRM researcher, 11 January 2021.

54 IgovZugdidi Application on Apple App Store, https://apps/apple.com/eg/app/igovzugdidi/id1442595116, and on Google Play, https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.artmedia.i_gov_zugdid

55 Mariane Kilasonia, Head of Public Relations Department at Zugdidi City Council, interview with IRM researcher, 20 November 2020; Zugdidi Municipality Council Facebook page,

56 Open Government Georgia, Georgia Status Report on Implementation of the action plan for 2018-2019, https://ogpgeorgia.gov.ge/en/monitoring-and-evaluation/

57 These were Ozurgeti Progress House and Guria Youth Resource Center

58 National Parliamentary Library e-repository, http://www.nplg.gov.ge/greenstone3/library?a=p&p=home&l=ka&w=utf-8

59 Parliament of Georgia, Parliamentary Strategy for Monitoring and Implementation of SDGs for 2019-2030 2019, available here

60 Open Government Standing Parliamentary Council 2019 Activities and Open Parliament Third Action Plan (2018-2019) Execution Report, page 7, available here

61 Parliament of Georgia, Implementation report of Open Parliament Action Plan 2018-2019, 2020, available here

62 "Learn more about the budget of your country" available at here

63 Meeting of Committee Chairman with the students from Kornard Adenaur Foundation, April 2019; available here. Meeting of Committee with the representatives of Youth Parliament, April 2019; available here

64 Inga Sanjikashvili, former representative of GIZ South Caucasus, interview with IRM researcher, 12 January 2021.

65 Parliament of Georgia, Implementation report of Open Parliament Action Plan 2018-2019, 2020, available here

66 Irina Arabidze, Legislative and Oversight Component Manager at USAID Georgia Good Governance Initiative (GGI), 3 November 2020.

67 Information sent to the IRM during the public comment period of this report by Irina Arabidze, USAID Georgia Good Governance Initiative (GGI), 7 July 2021.

68 Nino Tsukhishvili, Parliamentary Secretary, Georgian Young Lawyers' Association, interview with IRM researcher, 28 October 2020.

69 Geo Parliament application on Google Play, https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.georgianparliamentapp&hl=en, and on Apple app store https://apps.apple.com/gh/app/georgian-parliament/id1481271823

70 Parliament of Georgia, Implementation report of Open Parliament Action Plan 2018-2019, 2020, available here

71 Tamar Zodelava, Advisor on Legal Aspects of Service Delivery at GIZ Good Governance for Local Development Program, South Caucasus, interview with IRM researcher, 13 November 2020.

72 Delay to implementation, September 2018 - June 2019.

73 Concept Document for Citizen Engagement Center, Parliament of Georgia available here.

74 After the adoption of the new concept, some of activities have been implemented. These include opening a Parliamentary museum, making a documentary film about parliamentarism, preparing information flyers, and developing a training module on parliamentarism in the Parliamentary Training Center (PTC). (Information provided to the IRM during the pre-publication review off this report by Tamar Zodelava, Advisor on Legal Aspects of Service Delivery at GIZ Good Governance for Local Development Program, South Caucasus, 22 April 2021.)

75 Tamar Zodelava, Advisor on Legal Aspects of Service Delivery at GIZ Good Governance for Local Development Program, South Caucasus, interview with IRM researcher, 13 November 2020.

76 Information provided to the IRM during the pre-publication review of this report by Tamar Zodelava, Advisor on Legal Aspects of Service Delivery at GIZ Good Governance for Local Development Program, South Caucasus, 22 April 2021.

77 Parliament of Georgia, Open Governance Permanent Parliament Council Communication strategy and Action Plan for 2019-2020; 2019, https://bit.ly/3eqGjNM

78 Parliament of Georgia, Social Network Communication Strategy, 2019, https://bit.ly/3erSZUq

79 See https://web-api.parliament.ge/storage/files/shares/OGP/ogp-angarishebi/2020-ogp-sabchos-saqmianobis-SHUALEDURI-angarishi.pdf#page=15&zoom=100,86,680. In addition, with support from the EU and UNDP and in cooperation with IDFI, a Guide to Citizen Engagement and 10 different leaflets were produced. They provided information on engagement tools available for citizens to get involved in parliamentary processes, including e-petitions, legislative initiatives, differences between petitions and legislative proposals, and thematic inquiries. (Information provided to the IRM by Sophie Guruli (UNDP) during the pre-publication period of this report, 5 May 2021.)

80 Parliament of Georgia, Implementation report of Open Parliament Action Plan 2018-2019, 2020, available here

III. Multi-stakeholder Process

3.1 Multi-stakeholder process throughout action plan implementation

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

OGP's Articles of Governance also establish participation and co-creation requirements a country or entity must meet in their action plan development and implementation to act according to the OGP process. Georgia **did not** act contrary to OGP process.[1]

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

Table [3.2]: Level of Public Influence

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

Level of public influence		During development of action plan	During implementation of action plan
Empower	The government handed decision-making power to members of the public.		
Collaborate	There was iterative dialogue AND the public helped set the agenda.		
Involve	The government gave feedback on how public inputs were considered.	✔	
Consult	The public could give inputs.		✔
Inform	The government provided the public with information on the action plan.		
No Consultation	No consultation		

The withdrawal of the majority of CSOs from Georgia's multi-stakeholder forum shortly before the adoption of the fourth action plan (explained in detail in the IRM Design Report[3]) meant that CSOs had less overall ownership of the action plan. This in turn led to low interest among civil society to monitor and engage in the implementation. Thus, the implementation process of the fourth action plan had an overall more private nature compared to previous action plans, when the responsible agencies used to present commitment progress to forum members, who would then provide input.

The transfer of the OGP Secretariat from the Ministry of Justice to the Administration of Government (AoG) in 2019 gave a new impetus to revive stakeholder cooperation in the OGP process. During a forum meeting in December 2019, the secretariat presented the results of the fourth action plan to stakeholders.[4] The responsible agencies presented a briefing on the progress of commitment implementation and the challenges it faced. CSOs exchanged written comments, in line with AoG's new monitoring framework. In addition, in February 2020, after the official end of the fourth action plan, AoG established a Government High Level Interagency Coordination Council to work on open

governance issues, including OGP.[5] Despite the positive changes, most CSOs on the forum remained skeptical about the ambition of the fourth action plan as well as the results it could deliver.[6]

International donor organizations served as major drivers for the implementation process by providing financial and technical support to the implementing agencies, especially at the local level. This support resulted in higher implementation levels of the municipal commitments.[7] **Three Georgian municipalities involved in the fourth action plan (Akhaltsikhe, Khoni, and Ozurgeti) also were selected to join the expanded OGP Local Program in 2020.**[8]

For the Open Parliament commitments, the Parliament of Georgia led a separate process, independent from the national OGP secretariat.[9] The implementation and monitoring of these commitments was coordinated by the Open Governance Permanent Parliamentary Council and its Consultation Group, consisting of CSOs.[10] During the implementation, parliament also created working groups that brought together responsible parliamentary units (committees, departments, etc.) and relevant CSOs to engage in both planning and implementation. Parliament held regular meetings in which the working groups presented progress on their commitments and the Council and Consultation Group gave input and received feedback from the working groups. Several political factors resulted in the replacement of the Council's Chairwoman as well as members of the working groups. This delayed some Open Parliament commitments. However, the well-balanced dialogue from the co-creation continued into the implementation period. As such, the level of stakeholder involvement in the implementation of the Open Parliament commitments was higher than for the national commitments.

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[1] Acting Contrary to Process - Country did not meet (1) "involve" during the development or "inform" during implementation of the action plan, or (2) the government fails to collect, publish, and document a repository on the national OGP website/webpage in line with IRM guidance.
[2] "IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum," IAP2, 2014, https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/pillars/Spectrum_8.5x11_Print.pdf
[3] Open Government Partnership, IRM Georgia Design Report: 2018-2019, https://wwwopengovpartnership.org/documents/georgia-design-report-2018-2019/
[4] The administration of Government of Georgia, as an agency coordinating OGP Georgia, hosted a forum,
[5] A high-level advisory board of the government on open government issues was established, https://ogpgeorgia.gov.ge/en/news/ogp-management
[6] Giorgi Topuria, Senior Analyst at Transparency International- Georgia, interview with IRM researcher, 26 November 2020; Davit Maisuradze, Open Governance Direction Head at Institute for Development of Freedom of Information, interview with IRM researcher, 30 November 2020.
[7] Such as USAID Good Governance Initiative, UNDP project Fostering Decentralization and Good Governance at the Local Level in Georgia, GIZ Good Governance for Local Development South Caucasus.
[8] OGP Local, opengovpartnership.org/ogp-local/
[9] Parliament of Georgia, Implementation report of Open Parliament Action Plan 2018-2019, 2020, https://bit.ly/38rddgn. Minutes of the meetings of Open Governance Permanent Parliamentary Council and Its Consultation Group, www.parliament.ge/ge/saparlamento-saqmianoba/komisiebi-da-sabchoebi-9/ppcotg/oficialuri-dokumentebi/sabchos-oqmebi/
[10] Open Government Partnership, IRM Georgia Design Report: 2018-2019, https://wwwopengovpartnership.org/documents/georgia-design-report-2018-2019/

3.2 Overview of Georgia's performance throughout action plan implementation

Key:
Green= Meets standard
Yellow= In progress (steps have been taken to meet this standard, but standard is not met)
Red= No evidence of action

Multi-stakeholder Forum	During Development	During Implementation
1a. **Forum established:** The multi-stakeholder forum officially remained in existence during the implementation period, but major CSOs withdrew shortly before the adoption of the action plan. The first meeting of the new forum was held in December 2019 and an Open Government High Level Interagency Coordination Council was established in February 2020. Meanwhile, the Consultation Group of the OGP Permanent Parliamentary Council held meetings with CSOs on a regular basis to discuss the progress of Open Parliament commitments.	Green	Yellow
1b. **Regularity:** The forum did not meet during the implementation phase, while parliament held regular meetings during that time.	Green	Yellow
1c. Collaborative mandate development: This standard was assessed in the IRM Design Report.	Yellow	N/A
1d. **Mandate public:** Information on the forum's remit and guiding principles are available on Georgia's OGP webpage.[1] In addition, on 13 February 2020, the forum approved a new statute, including on its composition, objectives, and functions.[2]	Yellow	Yellow
2a. Multi-stakeholder: All the major non-governmental organizations had left the multi-stakeholder forum during implementation. In December 2019, the Parliament's OGP Permanent Parliamentary Council and its Consultation Group consists of both parliament and non-governmental organizations.	Green	Yellow
2b. **Parity:** All major non-governmental organizations left the multi-stakeholder forum before the implementation phase. Parliament's OGP Permanent Parliamentary Council and its Consultation Group have equal number of members from parliament and non-governmental organizations.	Yellow	Yellow
2c. Transparent selection: The selection process of the forum's non-governmental members did not change during the implementation period.	Yellow	N/A
2d. High-level government representation: The transfer of the OGP Secretariat from the Ministry of Justice to the Administration of Government (AoG) under the Prime Minister in Spring 2019 led to greater representation from high-level government officials on the forum. This increase in high-level government representation can be seen on the forum's statute from 13 February 2020.[3]	Red	Yellow

3a. Openness: The forum was open to receive input and representation on the action plan implementation from any civil society and other stakeholders outside the forum.	Green	Green
3b. Remote participation: Neither the government nor parliament provided opportunities for remote participation at meetings during the action plan's implementation. However, both began providing such opportunities in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.	Red	Red
3c. Minutes: The multi-stakeholder forum published minutes from a meeting held on 27 December 2019 to discuss the implementation progress.[4] The OGP Permanent Parliamentary Council documented all the major meetings and decisions and proactively published minutes on its webpage.	Red	Yellow

Key:
Green= Meets standard
Yellow= In progress (steps have been taken to meet this standard, but standard is not met)
Red= No evidence of action

Action Plan Implementation	
4a. Process transparency: Both the national OGP and Open Parliament websites are available where information on OGP process is proactively published. While the Open Parliament OGP website was available where information on OGP process was proactively published, the Open Government national website was not functional during the implementation phase. In June 2020, with support from USAID GGI, AoG launched a new national OGP website at https://ogpgeorgia.gov.ge/en/.	Yellow
4b. Communication channels: Both the Open Parliament national OGP websites have a contact feature but not with a dedicated functionality to provide feedback on the implementation process.	Yellow
4c. Engagement with civil society: OGP Permanent Parliamentary Council held meetings with civil society to discuss the implementation of the Open Parliament action plan. The national multi-stakeholder forum met once during the implementation period (on 27 December 2019) to discuss the progress of the fourth action plan.[5]	Yellow
4d. Cooperation with the IRM: While the forum shares the link to IRM reports with other government institutions and stakeholders to encourage input during the public comment phase, the OGP Permanent Parliamentary Council did not share the link with stakeholders.	Yellow
4.e MSF engagement: While the OGP Permanent Parliamentary Council provides a tool for members to monitor and deliberate on how to improve the implementation of the action plan, the MSF has developed a monitoring framework and tool, which was not utilized during the implementation process under MoJ leadership.	Yellow
4.f MSF engagement with self-assessment report: While the OGP Permanent Parliamentary Council developed a self-assessment report[6] and shared it with the stakeholders, the forum did not prepare a self-assessment report under the Ministry of Justice's leadership. After the leadership transition to Administration of Government, the government prepared a midterm self-assessment in June 2019,[7] a status report (quarters I-III),[8] and an end-of-term self-assessment in December 2020.[9] The midterm report was discussed at the December 2019 multi-stakeholder forum meeting, while the	Yellow

end-of-term self-assessment was submitted to the forum remotely due to the COVID-related restrictions.	Yellow
4.g. Repository: The repository was not available during the implementation period. AoG launched the new repository in 2020 (with support from USAID GGI) that is in line with IRM guidance.[10] The Permanent Parliamentary Council documented, collected, and published a repository on its website during the implementation phase.[11]	Yellow

[1] See https://ogpgeorgia.gov.ge/en/about-the-forum/.

[2] See https://ogpgeorgia.gov.ge/upload/pages/38/FileManager/Eng_OGP-Council_Statute.pdf.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Available at https://ogpgeorgia.gov.ge/forum-meetings/.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Parliament of Georgia, Implementation report of Open Parliament Action Plan 2018-2019, 2020, https://bit.ly/38rddgn

[7] OGP Georgia Midterm Monitoring on Implementation of the Action Plan for 2018-2019 https://ogpgeorgia.gov.ge/upload/pages/26/OGP%20Georgia%20Midterm%20Monitoring%20on%20Implementation%20of%20the%20Action%20Plan%20for%202018-2019.pdf

[8] Available for download https://ogpgeorgia.gov.ge/en/monitoring-and-evaluation/.

[9] Self-Assessment Report On the Implementation of Open Government Georgia Action Plan 2018-2019, December 2020, https://ogpgeorgia.gov.ge/upload/pages/26/Final%20Self-Assessment%20Report%20On%20the%20Implementation%20of%20Open%20Government%20Georgia%20Action%20Plan%202018-2019.pdf.

[10] OGP National Repository, https://ogpgeorgia.gov.ge/en

[11] Open Parliament Repository, www.parliament.ge/en/saparlamento-saqmianoba/komisiebi-da-sabchoebi-9/ppcotg

IV. Methodology and Sources

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

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

Current membership of the International Experts Panel is

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

This review process, including the procedure for incorporating comments received, is outlined in greater detail in Section III of the Procedures Manual[1] and in Georgia's Design Report 2018-2019.

About the IRM

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

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[1] IRM Procedures Manual, V.3, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/irm-procedures-manual

Annex I. IRM Indicators

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

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

Results oriented commitments?
A potentially starred commitment has more potential to be ambitious and to be implemented. A good commitment design is one that clearly describes the:
1. **Problem:** What is the economic, social, political, or environmental problem? Rather than describing an administrative issue or tool (e.g., 'Misallocation of welfare funds' is more helpful than 'lacking a website.').
2. **Status quo:** What is the status quo of the policy issue at the beginning of an action plan (e.g., "26 percent of judicial corruption complaints are not processed currently.")?
3. **Change:** Rather than stating intermediary outputs, what is the targeted behavior change that is expected from the commitment's implementation (e.g., "Doubling response rates to information requests" is a stronger goal than "publishing a protocol for response.")?

Starred commitments
One measure, the "starred commitment" (✪), deserves further explanation due to its particular interest to readers and usefulness for encouraging a race to the top among OGP-participating countries/entities. To receive a star, a commitment must meet several criteria:
- The commitment's design should be **Verifiable**, **Relevant** to OGP values, and have **Transformative** potential impact. As assessed in the Design Report.

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

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

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[1] "IRM Procedures Manual," OGP, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/irm-procedures-manual