

Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Lithuania End-of-Term Report 2016 – 2018

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Overview: Lithuania

Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) End-of-Term Report 2016 - 2018

Lithuania's third action plan focused on the openness of the public sector, preventing corruption and promoting transparency, and improving civic participation. While the action plan addressed major open government issues in Lithuania, the commitments themselves were limited in scope and most saw low levels of completion. However, the Office of the Government did establish a multi-stakeholder forum during the second year of the action plan and, for the first time, created guidelines on how to improve public consultations in Lithuania.

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a voluntary international initiative that aims to secure commitments from governments to their citizenry to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. The Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) carries out a review of the activities of each OGP-participating country. This report summarizes the results of the period from May 2016 to August 2018, and includes relevant developments up to September 2018.

The Office of the Government is the lead coordinating institution for Lithuania's participation in OGP. Aside from OGP-related activities, it assists the Prime Minister in implementing policies and coordinates the work of the ministries. A significant number of the commitments were carried out by the Office itself and the ministries. To gather the expertise for drafting and implementing the commitments, the Office of the Government also formed a working group of public officials, academia and civil society.

Lithuania's third action plan largely continued the themes of the previous two, namely increasing access to open data, increasing civic participation, and reducing corruption. While several commitments sought to address important open government issues in Lithuania (i.e. to encourage greater civic participation or reduce corruption in the healthcare system), the limited implementation time and scope of activities inhibited them from opening up government in a major way.

Although the third action plan aimed to address national issues, it largely focused on capital-based institutions and public officials. Though they could set the tone for the others, activities had no major links to Lithuanian regions or local public sector institutions.

The third action plan had nine commitments, none of them starred. One of them – to create a public consultation mechanism – for the first time offered specific guidelines for public sector institutions on how to organize public consultations and thus address the problem of low civic participation in

Table 1: At a Glance		
	Mid-term	End of term
Number of Commitments:	9	9
Level of Completion		
Completed:	0	1
Substantial:	0	2
Limited:	8	6
Not Started:	1	0
Number of Commitments with...		
Clear Relevance to OGP Values:	8	8
Transformative Potential Impact:	1	1
Substantial or Complete Implementation:	0	3
All Three (☺)	0	0
Did It Open government?		
Major:		0
Outstanding:		0
Moving Forward		
Number of Commitments Carried Over to Next Action Plan:		N/A

Lithuania. As the guidelines had to be tested, more citizens had the chance to participate in the decision-making process compared to previous action plans in Lithuania.

The Office of the Government did not publish a self-assessment report for the second year of implementation but planned to deliver it by December 2018.

At the time of writing this report (September 2018), the fourth action plan is still in the draft stage. The Office of the Government confirmed they would recommend the government to continue working on five commitments from the third action plan, namely the open data portal, consultation mechanism, e-platform for public sector's financial data, NGO database and NGO register.¹ This recommendation would also need support from the working group.

¹ Email to IRM researcher from Erika Kasiliunaite, the Office of the Government, 25 September 2018.

Consultation with Civil Society during Implementation

Countries participating in OGP follow a process for consultation during development and implementation of their action plan.

The Office of the Government consulted the members of the working group and was seeking to engage with a broader public, especially during the second cycle of implementation. The public's involvement became more active after the midterm because the Office of the Government committed to testing their new methodology for consultations as foreseen in the third action plan. Overall, they organized seven consultations for different institutions with the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour using them directly to implement their OGP commitments.

Although there were more opportunities for the public to engage, the members of the working group were kept aside. Until the midterm, the Office of the Government contacted the working group three times: once for their input during action plan development, once for discussing the ongoing implementation activities, and once for their feedback on the mid-term self-assessment report. In 2018, the renewed working group met only once – on 14 June 2018. It gathered to participate in the launch event of the IRM midterm report and to start discussing the commitments for the fourth action plan. Interviewed members of the working group generally did not find their participation in the third action plan to be useful.¹

Ieva Cesnulaityte, an officer at the Office of the Government, agreed that after the midterm, the Office focused more on developing the fourth action plan and did not proactively approach the working group.² However, she noted that the Office started a new initiative in line with OGP standards and launched a multistakeholder forum. Its members are expected to become involved in the activities of the fourth action plan cycle.

Table 2: Consultation during Implementation

Regular Multistakeholder Forum	Midterm	End of Term
1. Did a forum exist?	No	Yes
2. Did it meet regularly?	No	No

Table 3: Level of Public Influence during Implementation

The IRM has adapted the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) “Spectrum of Participation” to apply to OGP.³ This spectrum shows the potential level of public influence on the contents of the action plan. In the spirit of OGP, most countries should aspire for “collaborative.”

Level of Public Influence during Implementation of Action Plan		Midterm	End of Term
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		

¹ The list of interviewed members of the working group is available in the mid-term Lithuania Progress Report 2016 – 2017, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Lithuania_Mid-Term-Report_2016-2018_EN.pdf.

² Ieva Cesnulaityte, the Office of the Government, interview with IRM researcher, 13 July 2018.

³ For more information on the IAP2 Spectrum, see:

http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/foundations_course/IAP2_P2_Spectrum_FINAL.pdf.

About the Assessment

The indicators and method used in the IRM research can be found in the IRM Procedures Manual.¹ 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. Starred commitments are considered exemplary OGP commitments. To receive a star, a commitment must meet several criteria:

- Starred commitments will have “medium” or “high” specificity. A commitment must lay out clearly defined activities and steps to make a judgment about its potential impact.
- The commitment’s language should make clear its relevance to opening government. Specifically, it must relate to at least one of the OGP values of Access to Information, Civic Participation, or Public Accountability.
- The commitment would have a “transformative” potential impact if completely implemented.²
- The government must make significant progress on this commitment during the action plan implementation period, receiving an assessment of “substantial” or “complete” implementation.

Starred commitments can lose their starred status if their completion falls short of substantial or full completion at the end of the action plan implementation period.

In the midterm report, Lithuania’s action plan did not contain any starred commitments. At the end of term, based on the changes in the level of completion, Lithuania’s action plan still did not contain any starred commitments.

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

About “Did It Open Government?”

To capture changes in government practice, the IRM introduced a new variable “Did It Open Government?” in end-of-term reports. This variable attempts to move beyond measuring outputs and deliverables to looking at how the government practice has changed as a result of the commitment’s implementation.

As written, some OGP commitments are vague and/or not clearly relevant to OGP values but achieve significant policy reforms. In other cases, commitments as written appear relevant and ambitious, but fail to open government as implemented. The “Did It Open Government” variable attempts to capture these subtleties.

The “Did It Open Government?” variable assesses changes in government practice using the following spectrum:

- **Worsened:** Government openness worsens as a result of the commitment.
- **Did not change:** No changes in government practice.
- **Marginal:** Some change, but minor in terms of its effect on level of openness.
- **Major:** A step forward for government openness in the relevant policy area, but remains limited in scope or scale.
- **Outstanding:** A reform that has transformed “business as usual” in the relevant policy area by opening government.

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

Readers should keep in mind limitations. IRM end-of-term reports are prepared only a few months after the implementation cycle is completed. The variable focuses on outcomes that can be observed in government openness practices at the end of the two-year implementation period. The report and

the variable do not intend to assess impact because of the complex methodological implications and the time frame of the report.

¹ IRM Procedures Manual, <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/about/about-irm>.

² The International Experts Panel changed this criterion in 2015. For more information, visit <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/node/5919>.

Commitment Implementation

General Overview of Commitments

As part of OGP, countries are required to make commitments in a two-year action plan. The tables below summarize the completion level at the end of term and progress on the “Did It Open Government?” metric. For commitments that were complete at the midterm, the report will provide a summary of the progress report findings but focus on analysis of the ‘Did It Open Government?’ variable. For further details on these commitments, please see the Lithuania IRM progress report 2017.

Lithuania’s third action plan focused on three key areas: the openness of public sector institutions, preventing corruption and promoting transparency, and improving civic participation.

Table 4: Assessment of Progress by Commitment

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm	Did It Open Government?							
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	End of Term	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding	
1. Open data portal			✓		✓			✓				✓		✓					✓				
2. Publish civic participation opportunities		✓			✓					✓				✓		✓			✓				
3. Publish state and municipal budget information		✓			✓			✓		✓				✓					✓				
4. Advertisements on corruption in healthcare		✓			Unclear					✓			✓						✓				
5. Access to information on elections		✓			✓			✓		✓				✓					✓				
6. Public consultation mechanism			✓			✓				✓				✓			✓			✓			
7. Open government		✓				✓				✓				✓					✓				

culture in public sector															✓					
8. NGO database				✓	✓			✓			✓			✓				✓		
9. NGO Fund			✓			✓				✓				✓				✓		

Theme I: Openness to the public of the activities of government institutions

I. To build Lithuania's open data portal, and integrate into the European single digital market

Commitment Text:

The EU policy trends, related strategic documents, as well as the latest developments in the area of open data in Lithuania, have necessitated the development of IT infrastructure, the open data portal for opening Lithuanian public data to business and people, which would enable a free and convenient access to data managed by Lithuanian and EU public institutions, for the purpose of business development as well as non-governmental initiatives. The open data portal would centrally store and distribute the metadata of open data, provide for central handling of open data in terms of their preparation, procession, compilation, retrieval and convenient delivery to users, which would otherwise require more resources from individual institutions, and the entire public sector to that matter; it would also make available all open data-based applications. Centrally handled anonymization of the information, removal of commercial information or other legally protected information, conversion to open formats would enable a more flexible and relatively cheaper implementation of technological solutions improving access to open data. The national open data portal will be integrated with the EU Open Data Portal providing access to the open data spaces.

Milestones

- 1.1. Creation of an open data portal combining requisite technological means of metadata management, data anonymization and elimination, other statutory access restrictions, data conversion to open formats, finding semantic relationships, data retrieval and presentation management.
- 1.2. Creation/application of the existing interface required for an automated data delivery.
- 1.3. Development of metadata management guide, training of professionals in state institutions.
- 1.4. Integration of the open data portal with the EU Open Data Portal.

Responsible Institution: Information Society Development Committee under the Ministry of Transport and Communications

Supporting Institution(s): Ministries and their subordinate bodies

Start Date: 31 May 2016

End Date: 31 December 2018

Commitment Overview	Specificity	OGP Value Relevance (as written)	Potential Impact	Completion	Midterm	Did It Open Government?
					End of Term	

	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding	
I. Overall			✓		✓			✓				✓		✓				✓				

Commitment Aim

The commitment aimed to create a centrally-managed open data platform for citizens and businesses to access public data and reuse it for both non-profit and for-profit initiatives. The commitment also called for training state professionals to manage data, and for the open data portal to be integrated into the EU single digital portal.

Status

Midterm: Limited

By the midterm, the Information Society Development Committee had launched a procurement to prepare the methodological guidelines for the open data portal in late September 2017. However, the other tender documents (such as the creation of the portal itself) were still in their draft stages without funding allocated to fully implement the commitment. For more information, see the 2016-2017 IRM midterm report.¹

End of term: Limited

On 11 December 2017, the Information Society Development Committee contracted PricewaterhouseCoopers (a professional services network) to draft methodological guidelines for the portal and prepare materials to develop public sector capacity to work with open data.² The contract is scheduled to cover between 29 and 36 months. According to Julius Belickas, the advisor at the Committee, the commitment could be fully implemented in 2020.³ At the time of writing (September 2018), training materials were not yet prepared and trainings for public officials did not take place.

Partner institutions that would test the e-platform, namely the State Labour Inspectorate, the National Paying Agency under the Ministry of Agriculture, the Centre of Information Technologies in Education, the Lithuanian Labour Exchange, and the Centre for Agriculture, have been developing inventories of their data and preparing their datasets to publish in the open data portal once it is created. This is relevant in Lithuania, as 95 percent of public sector institutions do not know the exact scope of data they hold, according to the National Audit Office.⁴

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Did Not Change

Lithuania does not have a central database for open public sector data that is available free of charge. Thus, this commitment, if implemented, systematically tested, and carried further to other institutions could have transformed public access to government-held data. Although promising, the commitment has so far not changed the practice of publishing data because the data portal itself was not developed and is behind schedule. For this reason,

access to information and its quality remained unchanged at the end of the action plan period.

Carried Forward?

At the time of writing this report, Lithuania has not finished developing its fourth action plan. The Office of the Government informed the IRM researcher that it is considering carrying the commitment forward, but that this decision still needs support from the OGP working group and the Cabinet which confirms Lithuania's OGP action plans.⁵

This commitment is important to change the nature of accessing public sector data, but it should be more detailed and specific. The IRM researcher recommends consulting possible stakeholders before prioritizing which data to include in the portal, which would better address the needs of potential users and ensure more effective work planning.

¹ Independent Reporting Mechanism, Lithuania Progress Report 2016 – 2017, pg. 25, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Lithuania_Mid-Term-Report_2016-2018_EN.pdf.

² The contract with PricewaterhouseCoopers was sent to the IRM researcher on 25 September 2018.

³ Julius Belickas, Information Society Development Committee, interview by IRM researcher, 20 September 2018.

⁴ The report of the National Audit Office about open data in Lithuania, No. VA-P-900-I-25, 29 November 2016, https://www.vkontrole.lt/pranesimas_spaudai.aspx?id=22997.

⁵ Email to IRM researcher from Erika Kasiliunaite, the Office of the Government, 25 September 2018.

2. To develop and implement measures for publicizing information about government activities and civic participation in governance

Commitment Text:

Public information about the activities of the Government should be easily accessible and presented in a clear and understandable form in most appropriate for them communication channels. At the same time, the public has to have access information on public governance processes and participation possibilities. It is necessary not only to systematically publicize this information, but also to ensure methodological assistance to institutions and strengthen their capacities needed for greater openness of public governance processes.

Milestones

- 2.1. Development of the guidelines (recommendations) for the publicity of governmental activities with a view to ensure appropriate for the people publicizing of governmental activities, focusing on a common standard, interactivity, feedback and efficiency, through the application of the latest uniform communication standards, methods and tools.
- 2.2. Creation of an interactive electronic newsletter on governmental activities.
- 2.3. Development of a PowerPoint template for the presentation of governmental activities.
- 2.4. Creation of templates for publicizing government activities "Open Government" publicity campaign in "Facebook" social network.

Responsible Institution: Office of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania

Supporting Institution: N/A

Start Date: 31 December 2016

End Date: 31 December 2017

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

Commitment Aim

The commitment aimed to increase the accessibility of information on government activities and civic engagement opportunities. Specifically, it called for standardizing public information on government activities and providing capacity-building trainings for public officials to increase civic engagement in decision-making processes.

Status

Midterm: Limited

By the midterm, the Office of the Government had developed a final draft of its visual identity toolkit and had scheduled trainings for public officials, namely for communication specialists from the government and from the House of President. For more information, see the 2016-2017 IRM midterm report.¹

End of term: Complete

The Office of the Government confirmed its visual identity toolkit, started issuing regular newsletters about the activities of the Government, and created a communications guide and template for PowerPoint presentations. Altogether, they offer possible designs for logos, business cards, diplomas and other visuals for official representation, provide guidance on how to act in communication crises, and organize press conferences and communication campaigns.²

In April, May and June 2018 the Office of the Government held 19 seminars and consultations for public officials to teach them about the visuals, how to use them and to introduce different communication strategies for institutions to apply in their daily work. On 30-31 October 2018, the Office of the Government also held trainings on creative writing and different ways to communicate through social media. The Deputy Director of Communication from Government Communication Service David Watson and Senior Communication Officer Alex Fedorcio from the Metropolitan Police Service (both from the UK) held trainings on strategic communication and the OASIS Campaign Guide to aid government officials to deliver key messages, formulate objectives, and later evaluate their success. Overall, 215 officials participated in those events.³

The Office of the Government also launched a Facebook campaign called “The Ministry of Citizens” that aimed to post news about government activities and information on how to become involved in public matters. At the time of writing this report (September 2018), the page has 2,266 “likes” and 2,388 followers.⁴

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Did Not Change

Public consultations are uncommon in Lithuania and citizens are either not aware of the opportunities to engage in decision making, or the available information is too complicated for most citizens to understand.⁵ The Office of the Government therefore started this commitment with the focus on training public officials on how to hold consultations. According to a former advisor in the Communications Department at the Office of the Government Edita Baniene, government ministries lack communication skills to promote public consultations and need guidance for better communication.⁶

Although they were created, the visual identity tools and communication guides did not lead to changes in open government. Laima Patinskiene, the current advisor in the Communications Department at the Office of the Government, told the IRM researcher that those materials were in high demand among public officials and would assist them in carrying out public consultations. However, even if the trainings and communications toolkits make the logistics of organizing public consultations or press conferences easier, they did not disclose more information to the public. Also, there is no evidence that trainings led to improvements in the quality of public information or to an increase in the number of consultations carried out in the public sector.

Carried Forward?

At the time of writing this report (September 2018), Lithuania has not finished developing its fourth action plan. However, as the Office of the Government completed all activities for this commitment, it is not considering carrying the commitment forward.⁷

As the seminars have not necessarily lead to increased consultations, the IRM researcher recommends evaluating future events to find out how useful they were for the participants and what added value they brought. The IRM researcher also recommends testing the proposed methodology of trainings on a smaller scale and assess if trainings resulted in higher numbers of consultations

carried out in the public sector and if more citizens are accessing information about government activities.

¹ Independent Reporting Mechanism, Lithuania Progress Report 2016 – 2017, pg. 28, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Lithuania_Mid-Term-Report_2016-2018_EN.pdf.

² The IRM researcher received all materials on 14 September 2018.

³ Email to IRM researcher from Laima Patinskiene, the Office of the Government, 14 September 2018.

⁴ Facebook page “The Ministry of Citizens”, https://www.facebook.com/pilieciuministerija/?ref=br_tf

⁵ “Citizens’ Survey on the Openness of municipalities”, Transparency International Lithuania, 2014, <http://www.transparency.lt/tils-tyrimai-ir-analizes/>

⁶ Edita Baniene, interview by IRM researcher, 22 September 2017 (during the final evaluation of the third action plan Edita Baniene no longer served in this position).

⁷ Email to IRM researcher from Erika Kasiliunaite, the Office of the Government, 25 September 2018.

Theme II: Preventing corruption and promoting transparency

3. To publish online information about revenues and spending of national and municipal institutions

Commitment Text:

The objective is to create legal basis, which will provide conditions for the provision of information and data electronically to citizens about the revenue and expenses of the State and municipal institutions and agencies, and fund recipients. Also, an information system to make public the revenue and expenses of the State and municipal institutions and agencies, and fund recipients, will be created and launched.

Milestones

- 3.1. Legal acts regulating electronic provision of data and information on the revenue and expenses of the state and municipal institutions and agencies, and fund recipients, to the public have been drafted.
- 3.2. An information system to make public the revenue and expenses of the State and municipal institutions and agencies, and fund recipients, has been created and launched.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Finance

Supporting Institutions: Information Society Development Committee under the Ministry of Transport and Communications, Special Investigation Service, Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania

Start Date: 1 July 2016

End Date: 31 December 2018

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

Commitment Aim

The commitment sought to address the lack of information about state and municipal finances by creating a regularly updated e-platform for the revenues and expenses of national and local institutions to prevent corruption.

Status

Midterm: Limited

On 15 June 2017, the Ministry of Finance signed a contract with the European Social Fund Agency (ESFA) in Lithuania, which confirmed funding worth 580,000 EUR. ESFA selected the project to

develop the guidelines and methodology needed to improve the accessibility of revenues and spending at national and municipal levels. To do this, the Ministry of Finance contracted Ernst & Young Baltic to identify the types of financial data to be available and the technical specifications for the online platform, using the most cost-effective approach. It also organized meetings with CSOs to gather feedback on what data should be published in the portal. For more information, please see the 2016-2017 IRM midterm report.¹

End of term: Limited

The progress of the commitment was still limited at the end of the action plan cycle. Ernst & Young Baltic conducted an analysis of foreign practices to identify which financial data could be made publicly available in open data formats. The study reviewed open data cases in countries that have central data platforms, namely Armenia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Netherlands, Slovenia, and the US.²

Based on its research, Ernst & Young Baltic drafted technical specifications for the portal and the Ministry of Finance launched a tender for its creation. According to Rasa Kavolyte, deputy director at the Ministry of Finance, 10 different IT agencies inquired about the procurement.³ However, none of them sent proposals, due to the large scope of work and limited budget (369,407 EUR in total).⁴

To be able to carry out the commitment in the future, the Ministry of Finance is considering narrowing the scope of work by excluding data on planned budgets. This would need confirmation by the specially-formed working group of representatives from the Ministry of Finance, Special Investigation Service, Information Society Development Committee under the Ministry of Transport and Communications and the Association of Municipalities.⁵ The earliest possible deadline for completion of the commitment, according to Rasa Kavolyte, is mid-2019.

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Did Not Change

Residents of Lithuania have noted a lack of publicly available financial information since 2014.⁶ However, there were no efforts to systematically open data in open data formats. This commitment planned to address this discrepancy by creating a regularly updated e-platform for the revenues and expenses of national and local institutions. Despite this goal, the situation by the end of the action plan period remained unchanged. The commitment was not implemented and had no significant developments that could have led to improved access to national and municipal financial information.

Carried Forward?

At the time of writing this report (September 2018), Lithuania has not finished developing its fourth action plan. The Office of the Government is considering carrying this commitment forward, however this decision still needs support from the OGP working group and the Cabinet which confirms Lithuania's OGP action plans.⁷

Given the importance of open data and the demand from the public to have more accessible data in a user-friendly manner, the IRM researcher recommends carrying the commitment to the next action plan. The IRM researcher also recommends addressing the public demand for data on financial flows both at the national and local level, and to evaluate the costs of the platform before launching public procurement.

¹ Independent Reporting Mechanism, Lithuania Progress Report 2016 – 2017, pg. 30, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Lithuania_Mid-Term-Report_2016-2018_EN.pdf.

² Foreign practice analysis, Ernst & Young Baltic, https://pirkimai.eviesiejiirkimai.lt/app/rfq/publicpurchase_docs.asp?PID=407304

³ Public procurement for the online platform, <https://cvpp.eviesiejiirkimai.lt/Notice/Details/2018-650460>

⁴ Rasa Kavolyte, Ministry of Finance, interview by IRM researcher, 11 September 2018.

⁵ The Decree of the Finance Minister to form a working group, no. IK-246, 14 June 2016, <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/b937cc20332f11e6a222b0cd86c2adfc/1jwNdhdVFx?positionInSearchResults=0&searchModelUID=6558f856-9b62-4998-a7e6-39e6a0a056dd>

⁶ Public Survey “Lithuanian residents on local openness,” Transparency International Lithuania, 2014, <https://goo.gl/1BQFws>.
⁷ Email to IRM researcher from Erika Kasiliunaite, the Office of the Government, 25 September 2018.

4. To create and broadcast social advertisements that target corruption in the healthcare system

Commitment Text:

Publicity on corruption prevention in healthcare system will be created and will be broadcast every year by 31 December 2019. In order to apply targeted anti-corruption measures, a strategy to implement anti-corruption publicity (corruption prevention in healthcare system) will be created. A plan of measures will be drawn up: aims and objectives for anti-corruption publicity will be set, specific entities responsible for drafting and provision of anti-corruption information to its disseminators will be appointed, broadcasting intensity will be scheduled, and budget for drafting and dissemination of information will be planned. The anti-corruption publicity implementation system (strategy) is necessary to seek that awareness-raising and education campaigns were carried out systemically and involved several mass media technologies, in order to achieve larger coverage of the information disseminated. A package of audio-visual measures will be developed.

Milestone

4.1. A package of audio-visual measures to prevent corruption in healthcare system has been drafted.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Health

Supporting Institution: Special Investigation Service

Start Date: 1 January 2016

End Date: 31 December 2016

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

Commitment Aim

This commitment aimed to create and broadcast social advertisements that would provide citizens with anti-corruption information related to the healthcare system.

Status

Midterm: Not Started

By the midterm, the Ministry of Health was preparing a project proposal for the European Social Fund Agency to secure the funding for the commitment. At that time, however, the Ministry of

Health, had not finalized the project proposal, and no activities for this commitment were carried out. For more information, see the 2016-2017 IRM midterm report.¹

End of term: Limited

The Ministry of Health contracted two service providers (Vox Vera and Vizeum) in August 2018 to create anti-corruption social advertisements and prepare the communication plan.² These projects are scheduled to be completed over two years with a budget of 411,000 EUR.³

According to Loreta Katiniene, the advisor at the Ministry of Health, the Ministry has just started carrying out the projects. At the time of writing this report (September 2018), the Ministry of Health had purchased one article on the news portal DELFI.lt and planned to have another 100 articles published in various media outlets in Lithuania.⁴

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Did Not Change

Civic Participation: Did Not Change

Public Accountability: Did Not Change

This commitment did not directly address any OGP values. Social advertising on corruption in the healthcare system might lead to behavioral changes of the target group, but it alone does not open government, ensure access to information, or increase public participation. Given the significant problem of corruption in Lithuania's healthcare system,⁵ it is also unlikely that social advertisements would have a major impact on the issue.

Carried Forward?

At the time of writing this report (September 2018), Lithuania has not finished developing its fourth action plan. The Office of the Government is not considering carrying the commitment forward.⁶

The commitment is only one of several measures taken by the government to address corruption in the healthcare system. Although it might play a role with other anti-corruption activities, this commitment is not directly relevant to any OGP values, and so the IRM researcher does not recommend carrying it forward.

¹ Independent Reporting Mechanism, Lithuania Progress Report 2016 – 2017, pg. 33,

https://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Lithuania_Mid-Term-Report_2016-2018_EN.pdf.

² The Ministry of Health did not identify the service provider to the IRM researcher, emails from Loreta Katiniene, the Ministry of Health, 28 September 2018.

³ Email to IRM researcher from Loreta Katiniene, the Ministry of Health, 28 September 2018

⁴ The purchased article published on DELFI.lt, <https://www.delfi.lt/partnerio-turinys/nekisk-kysio/duodate-kysi-gydytojuimokate-uz-savo-tikejima-kad-gydys-geriau.d?id=79120631>

⁵ Lithuanian Map of Corruption, Special Investigation Service, 2016, <https://goo.gl/B4dqVn>

⁶ Email to IRM researcher from Erika Kasiliunaite, the Office of the Government, 25 September 2018

5. To create legal, organizational and technical tools to easily access detailed information about election and voting procedures, participation in the elections, donations to political campaign participants

Commitment Text:

A system will be designed and launched to provide access to detailed information on elections and voting procedures, participation in elections, and donations to a political campaign participant.

Responsible Institution: Central Electoral Commission (CEC)

Supporting Institution: Ministry of Justice

Start Date: Not specified

End Date: Not specified

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

Commitment Aim

The commitment aimed to improve access information on elections and voting procedures, participation in elections, and donations to political campaigns through the creation of legal, organizational, and technical tools. However, the commitment does not provide a measurable and verifiable definition of “legal, organizational, and technical tools,” and does not define what information will be made available.

Status

Midterm: Limited

By the midterm, this commitment was at the early stages, with no budget allocated for its implementation. At that time, the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) prepared a project proposal to receive financial support from the EU Structural Funds and was waiting for its evaluation. For more information, see the 2016-2017 IRM midterm report.¹

End of term: Limited

By the end of the action plan cycle, the commitment was still at the same preliminary stage of implementation with no further developments since the midterm. At the time of writing this report (September 2018), the CEC was waiting for the Ministry of Interior to approve the proposal which was submitted in 31 October 2016.²

According to the Ministry of Interior, the project proposal lacked sufficient argumentation to prove its necessity and was not in line with methodological requirements as confirmed in funding priorities of the Operational Programme for EU Structural Funds Investments for 2014-2020.³ However, Egle Sarkauskaite from the Regional Policy Department at the Ministry of Interior informed the IRM researcher that the funds for the project were reserved and the Ministry expected to make the final decision in October 2018.

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Did Not Change

The commitment did not open up government as the CEC's project proposal to improve access to information on elections was not carried out during Lithuania's third action plan cycle.

Carried Forward?

At the time of writing this report, Lithuania has not finished developing its fourth action plan. The Office of the Government is not considering carrying the commitment forward, but this decision still needs support from the OGP working group and the Cabinet which confirms OGP action plans.⁴

This commitment came directly from the National Anti-Corruption Program for 2015–2019, a strategic long-term document that maps the areas of government most prone to corruption with exact measures and responsible institutions for each of them. The Lithuanian government made the CEC responsible for implementing the commitment by the end of 2019, but the CEC coordinates its activities with the National Anti-Corruption Program rather than the action plan. Therefore, the IRM researcher does not recommend carrying this commitment forward to the next action plan.

¹ Independent Reporting Mechanism, Lithuania Progress Report 2016 – 2017, pg. 35, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Lithuania_Mid-Term-Report_2016-2018_EN.pdf.

² Email to IRM researcher from Kristina Ivanauskaitė-Pettinari, Central Electoral Commission, 24 September 2018.

³ Email to IRM researcher from Egle Sarkauskaite, the Ministry of Interior, 17 September 2018.

⁴ Email to IRM researcher from Erika Kasiliunaite, the Office of the Government, 25 September 2018.

Theme III Increased civic participation and engagement in public governance

6. To create public consultation mechanism

Commitment Text:

The commitment to create a public consultation mechanism is linked to the objective to regulate the public consultation procedure, and, having drafted methodological documents, to set a shared consultation practice among institutions.

Milestones

6.1. In compliance with the methodology provisions, joint public consultation practice will be shaped, and more active civic engagement will be encouraged.

6.2. The guidelines will help institutions achieve optimal way of consultation and will help, through concrete examples, shape joint practice of public consultation

6.3. An electronic publication and an awareness-raising video clip will be presented (made public) to institutions and the society through various channels of communication, hence encouraging institutions to make use of the methodological documents, and the society to take part in consultations

Responsible Institution: Office of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania

Supporting Institution: Ministry of the Interior

Start Date: 31 December 2016

End Date: 30 June 2018

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

Commitment Aim

The commitment planned to encourage greater civic participation in Lithuania by (1) developing a new public consultation methodology for public sector institutions, (2) drafting guidelines on how to apply the methodology, (3) publishing an awareness-raising video for the same purpose, (4) drafting a new methodology for monitoring civic participation in public consultations, and (5) assessing the efficiency of civic participation in public administration processes based on the new methodology.

Status

Midterm: Limited

By the midterm, the Office of the Government was in the process of drafting the methodology for public consultations and preparing the guidelines for public sector institutions on how to apply this methodology. The Office of the Government assigned seven ministries a different consultation methodology to test.¹ For more information, see the 2016-2017 IRM midterm report.²

End of term: Substantial

The Office of the Government presented the finalized methodology³ to public officials on 24 May 2018. As noted by Ieva Cesnulaityte from the Office of the Government, the aim was to introduce the guidelines for public sector representatives so that they knew the main principles of public consultations and how they should be organized in their respective agencies.⁴

To ensure public officials understood the rationale behind the methodology, the Office of the Government organized 11 trainings for the following ministries - Finance, Defense, Interior, Justice, Transport and Communications, Social Security and Labour, Health, Agriculture, Energy, Economy, Environment and launched an awareness-raising video about how to get engaged in public consultations.⁵ Overall, 161 officials participated in the trainings.⁶

Also, the Office of the Government tested the methodology in seven public sector institutions as initially planned. The Office of the Government invited Lithuanian citizens, experts, and public officials to discuss a wide range of questions, from choosing the memorial for Lukiskiu square in Vilnius (via an online consultation for Lithuanian citizens⁷) to proposing the provisions for the Data Protection Directive (a face-to-face meeting with identified interest groups⁸). To understand how to better organize future consultations, the Office of the Government carried out an internal analysis, marked the strengths and weaknesses of those events, and drafted recommendations for the next events.⁹

Although planned, the Office of the Government did not create the monitoring system to assess the efficiency of the methodology. Gitana Jurjoniene from the Office of the Government told the IRM researcher that the team responsible for the commitment focused on creating the guidelines for public consultations and postponed other activities. However, the Office of the Government still plans to create the system, as it was included in the project funded by EU Structural Funds (the contract to end in 2019).¹⁰

Did It Open Government?

Civic Participation: Marginal

While creating guiding documents for public consultations is an important improvement to civic participation, the commitment's objective (to "encourage more active civic participation in public administration processes") is broader than the specific activities could have achieved. Given the current low levels of civic participation in Lithuania, the creation, implementation, and monitoring of a public consultation methodology alone might not lead immediately to increased civic participation.

As the monitoring criteria was not developed and tested, the IRM researcher was unable to evaluate if the commitment achieved its goal. However, having the methodology for public consultations and publicly admitting the need to have them might put citizens in a better position when demanding to be engaged in the decision-making process. For this reason, the IRM researcher marked the possible improvement toward civic participation as "marginal".

Carried Forward?

At the time of writing this report (September 2018), Lithuania has not finished developing its fourth action plan. The Office of the Government is considering carrying the commitment forward, however this decision still needs support from the OGP working group and the Cabinet which confirms OGP action plans.¹¹

The commitment is an important first step towards addressing the problem of low public participation in Lithuania. To achieve higher participation levels, the IRM researcher recommends to firstly narrow the commitment's scope and, rather than focusing on the entire public sector or society, focus on a limited group of institutions. This would allow to test the methodology on a precise sample, evaluate the feedback of the participants and learn from them when organizing the next consultations. Following the sample of institutions long term would also bring added-value and let the Office of the Government know if the institutions in question continue consulting Lithuanian citizens even without external assistance.

¹ These seven ministries were the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Economy, the Research and Higher Education Monitoring, and the Analysis Centre (MOSTA) under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania.

² Independent Reporting Mechanism, Lithuania Progress Report 2016 – 2017, pg. 37, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Lithuania_Mid-Term-Report_2016-2018_EN.pdf.

³ The methodology for public consultations and the guidelines to test them (in Lithuanian), <https://epilietis.lrv.lt/lt/dalyvauk-1/viesuju-konsultaciju-metodika>

⁴ Ieva Cesnulaityte, the Office of the Government, interview with IRM researcher, 13 July 2018.

⁵ Awareness-raising video, the Office of the Government, <https://youtu.be/3Q5Xpo1UIH4>

⁶ The IRM researcher received the registration sheets by email on 10 September 2018.

⁷ Online consultation about the public space in Vilnius was open from 3 to 9 November 2017, <https://epilietis.lrv.lt/lt/konsultacijos/lukiskiu-aikste>

⁸ The consultation was held on 19 September 2017, <https://epilietis.lrv.lt/lt/konsultacijos/bendrojo-duomenu-apsaugos-reglamento-igyvendinimas-lietuvoje>

⁹ The analysis of experimental consultations is not available online, however it was sent to the IRM researcher on 26 July 2018.

¹⁰ Project "Open Government initiatives", No. 10.1.2-ESFA-V-915-01-0001, <http://lrvk.lrv.lt/lt/apie-vyriausybes-kanceliarija/projektai/vykdomi-projektai/atviros-vyriausybes-iniciatyvos>

¹¹ Email to IRM researcher from Erika Kasiliunaite, the Office of the Government, 25 September 2018.

7. To foster open public governance culture in public sector by introducing values of Open Government Partnership

Commitment Text:

It is important that civil servants and employees, who deal with citizens in their daily tasks, understood well the essence and methods of open public administration, and correctly apply the principles of open public administration in their daily work. It is necessary that the State and municipal institutions had a platform for an organized cooperation with the civil society, which would help understand the essence and methods of open public administration and create preconditions for the public institutions and civil society representatives to cooperate in their daily activities.

Milestones

7.1. Conferences and seminars with the civil society have been held.

7.2. Training for civil servants has been organised.

Responsible Institution: Office of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania

Supporting Institutions: Representatives of ministries and agencies accountable to them, representatives of municipal administrations

Start Date: 31 December 2016

End Date: 30 June 2018

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

Commitment Aim

The commitment aimed to foster an open government culture in Lithuania's public sector by strengthening the capacities of civil servants in the area of open public administration and by creating a forum for civil servants and society to cooperate.

Status

Midterm: Limited

By the midterm, the Office of the Government was in the earliest stages of implementing this commitment and the only activity carried out was a roundtable discussion on the state of open government in Lithuania. For more information, see the 2016-2017 IRM midterm report.¹

End of term: Substantial

In March 2018, the Office of the Government created a forum (the Open Government Network) for civil society members and public sector officials. At the time of writing this report (September 2018), this forum included 63 members: 31 CSO representatives, seven scientists, eight public officials, three business representatives, and the rest being ordinary citizens. The forum is open to anyone willing to join and requires filling out an online form,² introducing oneself and marking the expertise s/he is willing to share, as well as their fields of interest. The invitation to join the forum is available online on the official website of the government, also shared through the government's Facebook page.³ Greta Juodokaite, from the Office of the Government, informed the IRM researcher that the Office expects forum members to join the discussions on OGP-related activities and provide feedback for possible or ongoing commitments.⁴ Its members were invited to discuss the fourth action plan, however, they were not involved in the development or implementation of the third action plan. Every member received a regular newsletter with upcoming events, public consultations and round table meetings open to the public.

The Office of the Government planned various seminars and conferences to encourage an open government culture in Lithuania's public sector. The Office of the Government plans to hold these seminars in fall 2018 and spring 2019, with the aim to reach no less than 220 public officials at the national or local level.⁵

Did It Open Government?

Civic Participation: Marginal

The Office of the Government has not finished implementing this commitment and current results show little change in civic participation. Although the Office of the Government took positive steps towards opening decision-making processes and informs the 63 forum members about the possibilities to participate in public consultations, it plays only a marginal role in a country with 2.8 million residents.⁶

Prior to this commitment, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) recommended Lithuania promote a culture of civic engagement and disseminate open government principles and practices.⁷ While this commitment sought to address this recommendation, the chosen form of conferences and seminars are likely insufficient to achieve this goal. As stated in a recent analysis by Create Lithuania, it is not clear what short or long-term benefits such events could bring or what impact they might have on civic participation.⁸

Carried Forward?

At the time of writing this report, Lithuania has not finished developing its fourth action plan. The Office of the Government is not considering carrying the commitment forward.⁹

Although the commitment was not completed, the IRM researcher does not recommend carrying it forward to the next action plan. The language of the commitment is vague, and it is not clear what exactly the Office of the Government plans to achieve through its implementation. If the Office of the Government seeks to substantially change the attitudes of public officials, the IRM researcher recommends choosing a sample of institutions to test how effective the trainings are and use more innovative tools than roundtable discussions.

¹ Independent Reporting Mechanism, Lithuania Progress Report 2016 – 2017, pg. 40, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Lithuania_Mid-Term-Report_2016-2018_EN.pdf.

² The online form to become a forum member, <https://epilietis.lrv.lt/formos/atviros-vyriausybes-tinklo-nario-anketa>

³ The invitation to join the forum, <https://epilietis.lrv.lt/formos/atviros-vyriausybes-tinklo-nario-anketa>

⁴ Greta Juodokaite, the Office of the Government, interview by IRM researcher, 7 September 2018.

⁵ The IRM researcher received a written draft for planned seminars on 10 September 2018, however, no detailed agenda or speakers were available at that time.

⁶ Department of Statistics, data on demography, <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize?theme=all#/>

⁷ “Lithuania: Fostering Open and Inclusive Policy Making”, Section “Assessment and recommendations”, page 19, OECD Public Governance Reviews, 2015, <https://goo.gl/2cqac2>

⁸ “Better Measurement of Efficiency and Benefits of Public Sector Events While Seeking to Increase the Competitiveness of Lithuanian Economy”, situation analysis, Greta Juodokaite, Ieva Cesnulaityte, 2016, <https://goo.gl/xL23cD>

⁹ Email to IRM researcher from Erika Kasiliunaite, the Office of the Government, 25 September 2018.

8. Creation of NGO database

Commitment Text:

The objective of a single NGO data base (including data on potential applicants seeking state funding and reporting on the funds paid) is to create an exclusive data system that would provide standardized information on the nongovernmental sector of Lithuania and its involvement in the implementation of the programmes financed by public state / municipal institutions through an open tender. This database would enable the creation of an instrument of collection and dissemination of consolidated information for the department of Statistics of Lithuania, representatives of the non-governmental sector and public institutions, academic community and the society as a whole.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Justice

Supporting Institution: State Enterprise Centre of Registers, Ministry of Social Security and Labour, NGO Council, National NGO Coalition

Start Date: 30 September 2016

End Date: 31 December 2017

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

Commitment Aim

The commitment sought to establish a single public NGO database which would include all NGOs operating in Lithuania and provide at least part of the information about their activities free of charge.

Status

Midterm: Limited

By the midterm, the commitment was not on schedule to be completed, as the responsible institutions disagreed over the ownership of the commitment. In September 2017, Create Lithuania, a program for young professionals with international experience who consult public sector institutions on national issues, began their own initiative to implement the commitment. Create Lithuania started gathering examples of NGO databases from other countries to draft a concept for Lithuania. For more information, see the 2016-2017 IRM midterm report.¹

End of term: Limited

In March 2018, Create Lithuania completed its foreign practice analysis and drafted recommendations for a NGO database in Lithuania.² The team responsible for the deliverables suggested a definition of what constitutes an NGO and offered their view on how to amend the Law on NGOs (a recommendation by the IRM researcher in the midterm report). Amending the Law on NGOs would clarify the criteria for naming organizations as NGOs and thus help answer the question of which legal entities would qualify to be included in the database.

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour prepared the draft Law on NGOs and officially registered it for consideration on 12 June 2018.³ After that, it allowed eight days for interested parties to provide their proposals and launched a public consultation on 27 June 2018.⁴ The public consultation was broadcasted live and at the time of writing (September 2018) it was available to watch on Facebook. Overall, 39 people participated in the public consultation,⁵ and more than 2,000 viewed it online.⁶

Aurelija Olendraite, a former Create Lithuania participant, now a specialist at the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, informed the IRM researcher that the consultation brought new viewpoints on the legislation and they would be considered when further developing the Law.⁷ The Ministry has yet to confirm the amendments, which must be done before Parliament can vote on it.

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Did Not Change

The commitment aimed to create a single, publicly available database which would, for the first time, open information about NGOs free of charge. Currently, data on NGOs is stored at the State Enterprise Centre of Registers where legal entities provide information about their structure, contacts, activities, and financial performance. However, this information must be purchased.

Despite the goal of this commitment, the status quo remained the same after the end of the action plan cycle. The commitment is not yet implemented and has no significant developments that would lead to changes in access to NGO information.

Carried Forward?

At the time of writing this report, Lithuania has not finished developing its fourth action plan. The Office of the Government is considering carrying the commitment forward, but this decision still needs support from the OGP working group and the Cabinet which confirms OGP action plans.⁸

Amending the Law on NGOs could be an important step towards defining what constitutes an NGO. It would bring more clarity when drafting criteria to fund NGOs, while the register would let the public know what NGOs do. It is even more relevant as Lithuanian citizens may allocate 1 or 2 percent of their personal income tax to NGOs, even though many NGOs do not have websites to publish information about their activities, according to Transparency International Lithuania.⁹ For this reason the IRM researcher also recommends carrying the commitment forward.

¹ Independent Reporting Mechanism, Lithuania Progress Report 2016 – 2017, pg. 42,

https://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Lithuania_Mid-Term-Report_2016-2018_EN.pdf.

² The deliverables of Create Lithuania team, the Concept note for the definition of NGO and the NGO database,

<http://kurklt.lt/projektai/nvo-duomenu-bazes-steigimo-koncepcijos-parengimas-3/>

³ The draft Law on NGOs, No. 18-7328, [https://e-](https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAP/80bac6136e3b11e89bb0cb50d0500eab?positionInSearchResults=0&searchModelUUID=e41cdca5-2971-4e4d-9d77-4c02c4f00bc4)

[seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAP/80bac6136e3b11e89bb0cb50d0500eab?positionInSearchResults=0&searchModelUUID=e41cdca5-2971-4e4d-9d77-4c02c4f00bc4](https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAP/80bac6136e3b11e89bb0cb50d0500eab?positionInSearchResults=0&searchModelUUID=e41cdca5-2971-4e4d-9d77-4c02c4f00bc4)

⁴ The invitation to public consultation and the call for proposals opened on 20 June 2018,

<https://socmin.lrv.lt/lt/naujienos/viesoji-konsultacija-kviciame-diskutuoti-kokiu-naujoviu-reikia-nevyriausybinu-organizaciju-veiklos-pletrai>

⁵ The participants were mainly from the NGO sector. The IRM researcher received the full list by email on 11 September 2018.

⁶ A video recording of the consultation is available on Facebook, [https://www.facebook.com/pilieciuministerija/videos/473718666382666/?hc_ref=ARS088iPu4vc7UMIvwCeBLbpl_YporxXogXJhCONFzO_I99bsYOHo0AUxu9XBjdRBWM&_xts__\[0\]=68.ARDEzsXHZyUuSKNXuDnLN4plDsmnI9UOI_p_et2zHEI_NyMffQmlcoC90OWre5lh84Dm6BHRD9TsNxWhp2_oRbv8JnVWIFwm0-gdSSIE4pVEHtxFiIOVLTR_5h65adFTDwDV0v-ZidESY8BHjR82TVfMUc0VVwlvHADT20D8yKFzGYN6GsL2rsGo&_tn_=FC-R](https://www.facebook.com/pilieciuministerija/videos/473718666382666/?hc_ref=ARS088iPu4vc7UMIvwCeBLbpl_YporxXogXJhCONFzO_I99bsYOHo0AUxu9XBjdRBWM&_xts__[0]=68.ARDEzsXHZyUuSKNXuDnLN4plDsmnI9UOI_p_et2zHEI_NyMffQmlcoC90OWre5lh84Dm6BHRD9TsNxWhp2_oRbv8JnVWIFwm0-gdSSIE4pVEHtxFiIOVLTR_5h65adFTDwDV0v-ZidESY8BHjR82TVfMUc0VVwlvHADT20D8yKFzGYN6GsL2rsGo&_tn_=FC-R)

⁷ Aurelija Olendraite, Ministry of Social Security and Labour, interview by IRM researcher, 10 September 2018.

⁸ Email to IRM researcher from Erika Kasiliunaite, the Office of the Government, 25 September 2018.

⁹ “NGOs Survey on NGO Transparency”, Transparency International Lithuania, 2015, <http://www.transparency.lt/nvo-atstovu-apklausa-apie-nvo-skaidruma/>

9. Creation of NGO fund

Commitment Text:

The purpose of the fund is to finance the strengthening of institutional capacities of NGOs required for participation in the public decision-making process, as well as drafting of proposals by NGOs on decisions of public governance and presentation to the interested institutions and the public; strengthening of competences of NGO representatives required for the drafting and presentation of such proposals. The fund will promote the creation of the self-regulation mechanisms of the NGO sector, creation of transparency and accountability standards, communication of its activities by various means to the public, cultivation of competences and skills for participation in the public policies and their implementation with the aim to provide high-quality public services for the population.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of the Interior

Supporting Institutions: Ministry of Social Security and Labour, NGO Council, National NGO Coalition

Start Date: 31 December 2016

End Date: 31 December 2017

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

Commitment Aim

This commitment aimed to strengthen the capacity of NGOs to participate in the decision-making process by creating a National Civil Society Fund (NGO Fund). The NGO Fund would finance different programs specifically for NGOs that want to develop their advocacy skills, increase their capacity to draft legal acts, and participate in policy making.

Status

Midterm: Limited

By the midterm, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour had not completed any of the planned activities for this commitment. The group of NGOs was drafting the concept of the Fund for the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. Although interviewed NGOs claimed to be satisfied with the

role of the Ministry, some added that all the work was done entirely by the NGOs. For more information, see the 2016-2017 IRM midterm report.¹

End of term: Limited

The deadline for the commitment was December 2017, but it was not completed. The group of 10 NGOs finished the concept note for the NGO Fund, in which they examined possible governance structures, financial sources, and funding mechanisms.² The study concluded that the Fund would require about 20.5 million EUR annually to operate, with 15 percent of the budget allocated to administrative costs.

The feasibility study was discussed at the NGO Council (a cooperation platform for public officials and umbrella organizations) on 14 November 2017³ and with the Prime Minister Saulius Skvernelis on 18 April 2018.⁴ Prime Minister Skvernelis expressed his support for NGO Fund and assured it would be considered in the Parliament next spring.

Although the concept note of the NGO Fund was supported both by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Finance raised questions about the validity of financial calculations to maintain the Fund.⁵ To strengthen the financial side of the study, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour asked the group of NGOs that prepared the study to support their arguments.⁶

At the time of writing this report (September 2018), the feasibility study was not updated, and the Ministry did not have the deadline clearly set.

Did It Open Government?

Civic Participation: Did Not Change

This commitment is not yet implemented, and the deliverables are not finalized. So far, the commitment has not led to increased civic participation or strengthened the capacity of NGOs to participate in the decision-making process.

Carried Forward?

At the time of writing this report, Lithuania has not finished developing its fourth action plan. The Office of the Government is considering carrying the commitment forward, but this decision still needs support from the OGP working group and the Cabinet which confirms Lithuania's OGP action plans.⁷

Most NGOs in Lithuania are small, local organizations that rely heavily on volunteers rather than full-time employees. To strengthen their abilities to advocate for change and be able to participate in public policy, they need better advocacy skills and more sustainable resources, all of which were foreseen within the capacity of the NGO Fund. Therefore, the IRM researcher recommends carrying this commitment forward to the next action plan.

¹ Independent Reporting Mechanism, Lithuania Progress Report 2016 – 2017, pg. 45,

https://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Lithuania_Mid-Term-Report_2016-2018_EN.pdf.

² Feasibility study on NGO Fund in Lithuania, http://olf.lt/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/PVPA_galimybiu_studija_su_citata.pdf

³ The agenda of the NGO Council, 17 November 2017,

https://socmin.lrv.lt/uploads/socmin/documents/files/pdf/13724_darbotvarke-2017-11-14.pdf

⁴ Official meeting with Prime Minister Saulius Skvernelis, 18 April 2018, <https://lrv.lt/lt/naujienos/premieras-susitiko-su-nevyriausybinu-organizaciju-atstovais>

⁵ Aurelija Olendraite, Ministry of Social Security and Labour, interview by IRM researcher, 10 September 2018.

⁶ Aurelija Olendraite, Ministry of Social Security and Labour, interview by IRM researcher, 10 September 2018.

⁷ Email to IRM researcher from Erika Kasiliunaite, the Office of the Government, 25 September 2018.

Methodological Note

The end-of-term report is based on desk research and interviews with governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders. The IRM report builds on the findings of the government's self-assessment report; other assessments of progress put out by civil society, the private sector, or international organizations; and the previous IRM progress report.

In preparing this report, the IRM researcher conducted eight additional interviews with representatives of each responsible institution to track the progress of the third action plan and numerous email/telephone enquiries. To write this report, the IRM researcher also analyzed new draft laws, official documents and studies that were not available at the time of the midterm report.

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

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