

Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Lithuania Transitional Results Report 2018– 2020

This report was prepared in collaboration with Rugile Trumpyte, 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 Rugile Trumpyte 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 Lithuania's fourth action plan for 2018-2020. 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.

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

Lithuania's fourth OGP action plan largely focused on open data availability, public participation and the environment of NGOs. Four of the action plan's six commitments were carried forward from the previous action plan (2016-2018), in particular those that were unfinished by the end of 2018. Though narrower in scale compared to the previous action plan, the fourth plan saw greater levels of implementation and thus achieved more tangible results that might shape the public sector's work beyond 2020. This is especially the case with open data initiatives and efforts to invest in NGOs' capacities.

Commitments to open data saw stronger results at the end of the action plan than others, partly because they were started during the previous action plan (in 2016) and had significantly more time to be finalized. Notably, under Commitment 1, the Information Society Development Committee developed Lithuania's first centrally managed open data portal (<https://data.gov.lt>) which provides public sector data in a single platform and free of charge. As of March 2021, the portal includes more than 1,150 datasets from 28 public sector institutions, covering sectors such as agriculture, infrastructure, health, business, education, employment, and culture. The government aims to expand the portal to include data from more public sector institutions in the future. Under Commitment 2, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour created an NGO Fund to finance NGO projects. The fund will start operating in 2021 by opening competitive calls for project proposals from NGOs.¹ Lastly, under Commitment 3, the Ministry of Finance launched Lithuania's first large-scale open data portal (www.lietuvosfinansai.lt) on public spending. The new portal includes, for the first time in one centralized location, all public finances from the national and municipal levels and with data available in open format.

2.2. COVID-19 pandemic impact on implementation

Although the COVID-19 pandemic had a major effect on the public, non-governmental, and private sectors in Lithuania, it did not significantly impact the implementation of the fourth OGP action plan in 2020. According to the Office of the Government, while it became more challenging to organize OGP activities during the pandemic,² online events gathered larger numbers of attendees and so it remained relatively easy to engage with interested stakeholders.³ According to a senior advisor at the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the pandemic caused the action plan's timeline to shift to autumn 2020, which led to slower implementation of its commitments.⁴

Although not directly related to the OGP action plan, the COVID-19 pandemic enabled other public sector bodies to place transparency and digitalization at the core of their activities. For instance, the Public Procurement Office (PPO) published aggregated data on all public procurement contracts to acquire products and services to curb the health crisis.⁵ Now, using different filters, one can look for a variety of contracts based on a specific interest, such as procuring organization, supplier, contract value, and product type.⁶ As noted by the President of Lithuania, Gitanas Nausėda, even in times of crisis, public procurement procedures must continue to be transparent and open to public scrutiny.⁷

¹ Aurelija Olendraite, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, interview by IRM researcher, 21 October 2020.

² Ibid.

³ These included three working group's meetings (5 December 2019, 14 April 2020, 17 September 2020), one public consultation from 11 November - 12 December 2019, and one international conference on 21 May 2020. The other public consultations were organized to develop the fifth OGP action plan.

⁴ Aurelija Olendraite, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, interview by IRM researcher, 21 October 2020.

⁵ Contracts to curb COVID-19, Public Procurement Office, <https://vpt.lrv.lt/sudarytos-sutartys-kovai-su-covid-19>

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ The President: transparency is essential in the fight against COVID-19, the President of Lithuania, <https://www.lrp.lt/lt/ziniasklaidos-centras/naujienos/prezidentas-kovoje-su-covid-19-butini-skaidrus-ir-kokybiski-viesieji-pirkimai/33928>.

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. 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 1: Create an open data portal and integrate it into the European digital single market	
Aim of the commitment	Under this commitment, the Information Society Development Committee (ISDC) aimed to create a centrally managed open data portal to access public sector data and use it for both non-profit and for-profit initiatives. Lithuania carried this commitment forward from the previous action plan (2016-2018), since the open data portal was unfinished by the end of that plan. ²
Did it open government? Major	<p>Prior to the action plan, Lithuania had no central database where citizens and businesses could access open data from public sector institutions free of charge. In addition, a 2016 National Audit Office report found that 95 percent of public sector institutions did not inventory their data, and the exact scope of data held was largely unknown.³</p> <p>As a result of this commitment, the ISDC has created Lithuania’s first centrally managed open data portal (https://data.gov.lt, launched in July 2020) for citizens and businesses to access public sector data and reuse it. By the end of the action plan period (September 2020), the portal consisted of roughly 1,000 datasets from 16 institutions, covering topics such as public finances, employment, environment, and culture, among others.⁴ The names and descriptions of the datasets are also translated into English automatically. In addition, according to the government’s self-assessment, Lithuania’s portal is linked to the European Data Portal, thus fulfilling an objective of the commitment to integrate the portal into the European digital single market.⁵ The legal acts regulating the standards of open data were approved by the Ministry of Economy and Innovation on 28 December 2020.⁶ Thus, the IRM considers this commitment to be fully implemented.</p> <p>During the action plan period, Lithuania improved its ranking among the EU27+ in the European Data Portal’s Open Data Maturity Report by 13 points, from 24th in 2019 to 11th in 2020.⁷ In addition, Lithuania moved from being classified as an open data “Follower” to a “Fast-tracker” in the 2020 Open Data Maturity Report.⁸ Therefore, the implementation of this commitment represents a major improvement to the way public sector data is stored and accessed in Lithuania, compared to the situation prior to the action plan. Although Lithuania’s portal is still relatively new, the ISDC plans to expand its scope and include more public sector organizations.⁹ As of mid-January 2021, the portal has more than 1,100</p>

	<p>datasets from 21 institutions, an increase from 16 at the end of the action plan period.¹⁰ According to the government’s end-of-term self-assessment, the ISDC will expand the portal to cover data from 50 public sector institutions by mid-2023.¹¹</p> <p>The portal includes guidance for public sector institutions on how to inventory and prioritize their data for publication and how to ensure their published data is high quality.¹² The Ministry of Economy and Innovation approved these recommendations on 28 December 2020 and the ISDC has already begun to use them in practice and encourages other public sector institutions to use them as well.¹³</p> <p>According to an open data expert from Open Code Lithuania, while the new portal is a welcomed step, progress towards opening public data remains slow in Lithuania.¹⁴ He also noted that the new portal currently consists of data from the public institutions that are most interested in adhering to open data policies.¹⁵ However, key anti-corruption datasets, such as beneficial ownership of companies, remain unavailable in Lithuania. In addition, local media did not cover the new portal despite its potential importance to public well-being.¹⁶ According to the commitment lead at the ISDC, there are only two people working on the portal and ISDC does not have sufficient resources for publicity work, education, technical support of institutions, or further development of the portal.¹⁷</p>
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Commitment 2: Develop an NGO database and an NGO fund

<p>Aim of the commitment</p>	<p>Under this commitment, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and the National Centre of Registers aimed to create a database and a fund for NGOs in Lithuania. This would create an NGO database and disclose key information about their activities. The Fund would centrally finance NGOs to develop their advocacy skills, increase their capacity to draft legal acts, and participate in policy making. This commitment combined and carried forward two unfinished commitments from Lithuania’s previous action plan (2016-2018).¹⁸</p>
<p>Did it open government?</p> <p>Marginal</p>	<p>The two main activities of the commitment, the NGO database and NGO Fund, were completed by the end of the action plan period.</p> <p>The Ministry of Social Security and Labour reconfigured the National Centre of Registers in October 2020, but on a smaller scale than originally planned.¹⁹ There will not be a separate database for the public to search for NGOs based on area of expertise. Instead, the National Centre of Registers will provide an option for legal entities to classify themselves as NGOs and then introduce a filter to distinguish NGOs from other organizations.²⁰ According to a senior official at the ministry, this deliverable was the closest option to what the ministry and the National Centre of Registers could agree on.²¹ The system will be built entirely on trust, as no one will verify if an organization tagged as an “NGO” in the National Centre of Registers is truly an NGO as defined by the Law on NGO’s Development.²²</p> <p>Prior to the action plan, Lithuania had no central list of NGOs and there were no tools to evaluate which organizations should be categorized as such (as opposed to social businesses or business-oriented associations). The classification of NGOs on the National Centre of Registers is an important first step towards systematizing information about NGOs and thus improving the accessibility of this</p>

	<p>information to the public. This activity is also highly connected to the NGO Fund discussed below and could help streamline the process of funding NGOs through state programs. However, the improvements to access to information on NGOs is marginal so far, considering the above-mentioned limitations. For example, the database lacks verification on whether registered NGOs on the database are in fact NGOs. It also currently lacks the possibility for the public to search for NGOs based on area of expertise.</p> <p>The NGO Fund was another activity of this commitment and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour implemented it as planned. In August 2020, the ministry developed the NGO Fund's²³ governing structure and policies, including the rules to avoid conflict of interest.²⁴ The Fund, which started from an NGO-drafted concept, is scheduled to launch its first calls for projects to receive funding in the first quarter of 2021.²⁵ The Ministry of Social Security and Labour announced that 1.4 million euros would be distributed to the Fund annually.²⁶ The ministry analyzed international experience of counterpart NGOs and cooperated with CSOs to draft the working conditions for Lithuania's NGO Fund.²⁷</p> <p>According to the CEO of the National NGO Coalition, the Fund is a timely initiative due to the unsystematic funding NGOs received in the past and that few investments focused precisely on their capacity.²⁸ Also, Lithuania did not previously have sustainable mechanisms to strengthen the capacities of NGOs, so this initiative opens new possibilities and gives freedom for NGOs to carry out their initiatives over the long term.²⁹ Once operational, the NGO Fund will provide central investment into capacities of NGOs and ensure there is a unified model to annually finance them. This could be significant because NGOs in Lithuania previously depended on funding from different public sector bodies, which use their own financing models and apply their own definition to what constitutes an NGO.³⁰ For example, in a 2015 Transparency International Lithuania survey, 34 percent of Lithuanian NGOs said that national and municipal level institutions did not have clear criteria for financing NGO projects and applied different criteria to the definition of an NGO.³¹ However, the impact of the new NGO Fund can only be assessed after it is fully operational in 2021.</p>
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Commitment 3: Publicize information on revenue and expenditure of state and municipal institutions in the electronic environment

<p>Aim of the commitment</p>	<p>Under this commitment, the Ministry of Finance aimed to open financial data in a centralized portal and disclose revenue and expenses of state and municipal institutions. This was carried forward from Lithuania's previous action plan (2016-2018) because it was unfinished by the end of that plan.³²</p>
<p>Did it open government?</p> <p>Major</p>	<p>The Ministry of Finance launched a new open data portal, thus fully completing the commitment. The new financial open data portal includes 12 large-scale financial datasets for each of the 60 municipalities in Lithuania.³³ The available open datasets on the portal cover topics ranging from revenue and expenses of state and municipal institutions, to debts, income, and unemployment, and cover the period 2018-2019. Moreover, the newly available financial datasets from national-level bodies include all public and private recipients, such as corporations, small or medium businesses, and NGOs that received public funding for goods or services they provided.³⁴</p>

	<p>Before the action plan, there was no way to systematically gather public sector data in order to evaluate how public funds were used at the national or municipal level, or assess the financial performances of public institutions. Previously, only one in every six municipalities in Lithuania published this information in open data format on their websites and no national bodies made their financial data available in a user-friendly format.³⁵ In addition, much of the now centralized financial data was only available for researchers and interested citizens upon request from the different municipal and state-level institutions. As a result of this commitment, the Ministry of Finance has launched Lithuania's first large-scale open data portal covering public spending where any interested person may use the available data to see how municipalities and state-level institutions use public funds. Importantly, journalists, NGOs, or interested citizens can now more easily access and (re)use key available financial datasets for all Lithuanian municipalities, much of which was previously unavailable or difficult to obtain. Although the action plan did not specify the quantity of data the ministry would open, the implementation of this commitment has improved access to financial data in Lithuania in a major way, particularly at the municipal level.</p> <p>Moreover, the Ministry of Finance has already analyzed the data and presented its insights online. According to the deputy director at the Ministry of Finance, the new portal will not only benefit citizens, in terms of access to previously unavailable data, but also the ministry's staff, who have used the newly opened data to assess the efficiency of public spending and the use of state property.³⁶ The deputy director expects that the data on the portal could reinvigorate public and institutional debates around the distribution of public funds.³⁷</p>
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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 Lithuania's noteworthy commitments, see the Executive Summary of the 2018-2020 IRM Design Report, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Lithuania_Design_Report_2018-2020_EN.pdf

² OGP, Lithuania End-of-Term Report, p 11, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Lithuania_End-Term_Report_2016-2018_EN.pdf

³ National Audit Office report, https://www.vkontrole.lt/pranesimas_spaudai.aspx?id=22997

⁴ These include, among others, the National Paying Agency, State Labour Inspectorate, the Public Procurement Office, the Ministry of Finance or Employment Services.

⁵ OGP, Lithuania self-assessment report, p 5, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Lithuania_End-of-Term_Self-Assessment_2018%E2%80%932020_EN.pdf

⁶ See <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/2bf2218048d311eb8d9fe110e148c770>.

⁷ European Data Portal, 2020, https://www.europeandataportal.eu/sites/default/files/country-factsheet_lithuania_2020.pdf

⁸ European Data Portal, p 89,

https://www.europeandataportal.eu/sites/default/files/edp_landscaping_insight_report_n6_2020.pdf

⁹ Julius Belickas, the Information Society Development Committee, interview by IRM researcher, 13 October 2020.

¹⁰ Portal datasets, last checked 18 January 2021, <https://data.gov.lt/organizations>

¹¹ OGP, Lithuania self-assessment report, p 5, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Lithuania_End-of-Term_Self-Assessment_2018%E2%80%932020_EN.pdf

¹² Information Society Development Committee, Guidance on data inventory, draft act, <https://bit.ly/3mw9ZvR>

¹³ Julius Belickas, the Information Society Development Committee, interview by IRM researcher, 13 October 2020.

¹⁴ Mantas Zimnickas, Open Code Lithuania, interview by IRM researcher, 2 November 2020.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Julius Belickas, the Information Society Development Committee, interview by IRM researcher, 13 October 2020.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ OGP, Lithuania End-of-Term Report, p 29-32, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Lithuania_End-Term_Report_2016-2018_EN.pdf

¹⁹ The description of the commitment in the action plan 2018-2020, https://epilietis.lrv.lt/uploads/epilietis/documents/files/National%20Action%20Plan_2018-2020_%20ENG.pdf

²⁰ The Centre of Registers, Guidelines for NGOs to register their status, <https://info.registrucentras.lt/node/104642>

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- 21 Ibid.
- 22 The Governmental decree on Changes for Legal Entities' Status, No. 1016, <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/00d602e0fbd611ea12ad7c04a383ca0>
- 23 The Government Confirmed an NGO Fund, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, <https://socmin.lrv.lt/lt/naujienos/vyriausybe-patvirtino-kaip-veiks-nvo-fondas>
- 24 The Decree on the Implementation of the Law on NGOs, No. 141, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/7615a050547f11ea931dbf3357b5b1c0/asr>
- 25 Aurelija Olendraite, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, interview by IRM researcher, 21 October 2020.
- 26 Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the minutes of the working group meeting of an NGO Council, https://socmin.lrv.lt/uploads/socmin/documents/files/administracine-informacija/tarybos%20ir%20komisijos/NVO_taryba/Protokolas%2020210121-converted.pdf
- 27 Aurelija Olendraite, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, interview by IRM researcher, 21 October 2020.
- 28 Gaja Savele, National NGO Coalition, interview by IRM researcher, 11 November 2020.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Transparency International Lithuania, "NGOs Survey on NGO Transparency," 2015, <http://www.transparency.lt/nvo-atstovu-apklausa-apie-nvo-skaidruma>
- 32 OGP, Lithuania End-of-Term Report, p 29-32, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Lithuania_End-Term_Report_2016-2018_EN.pdf
- 33 The Ministry of Finance, Open data portal, www.lietuvosfinansai.lt
- 34 Financial recipients of public funds, Open data portal, <https://rinkiniai.lietuvosfinansai.lt/dataset/suppliers>
- 35 Transparency International Lithuania, "Transparency of Lithuanian Municipalities," www.jurgiokepure.lt
- 36 Rasa Kavolyte, the Ministry of Finance, interview by IRM researcher, 7 October 2020.
- 37 Ibid.

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)
1. Create an open data portal and integrate it into the European digital single market	Complete For details regarding the implementation and early results of this commitment, see Section 2.3.
2. Develop an NGO database and an NGO fund	Complete For details regarding the implementation and early results of this commitment, see Section 2.3.
3. Publicize information on revenue and expenditure of state and municipal institutions in the electronic environment	Complete For details regarding the implementation and early results of this commitment, see Section 2.3.
4. Transfer public services to NGOs and communities	Limited This commitment aimed to address inefficiencies in the delivery of public services by creating a model for NGOs and communities (rather than public sector institutions) to provide 5–10 percent of services to residents. By the end of the action plan, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour created a model to finance day-care centers to ensure that such centers have constant financial flow and thus avoid annually applying for project funding. According to a senior advisor at the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the ministry developed a model only for day-care centers because the government still had not implemented the recommendations of the National Audit Office to inventory public services and evaluate their quality. ¹ With no knowledge of the quality of public services and no inventory, the ministry could not include other public services in its model.
5. Consistently monitor and evaluate public participation in governance	Complete The Office of the Government prepared a methodology to evaluate the effectiveness of public consultations and assessed 161 public sector institutions in how they carry out their consultations. ² Afterwards, the Office of the Government provided recommendations on how to improve the methodology. After assessing the state of public consultations, the Office of the Government found that the number of civic engagement activities were increasing in 2019 and that 32 percent of them ended in proposing specific legal acts. ³ However, qualitative interviews showed that public officials

	<p>continue to have different understandings of how to carry out consultations in an inclusive and open way.⁴</p> <p>Although an important first step in improving the quality of consultations, the methodology was not designed to be used by public institutions themselves independent of the Office of the Government, which applied it in partnership with a hired supplier.⁵ The methodology is not meant for self-assessing and does not include detailed methodological guidance that would enable any institution to evaluate its own performance. Rather, it is meant to be applied by a third party, in this case - the Office of the Government.</p>
<p>6. Introduce ex post evaluation in the legislative process cycle</p>	<p>Limited</p> <p>The Ministry of Justice prepared legal amendments for introducing ex post evaluations, which the Parliament passed in May 2019.⁶ However, other legal acts designed to introduce the methodology for such evaluations and quality control are still not ready.⁷ As a result, the planned trainings for public officials did not take place.</p>

¹ National Audit Office, Is Lithuania ready to transfer public services, 2017, <https://www.vkontrole.lt/failas.aspx?id=3735>

² The performance report, the Office of the Government, email to IRM researcher, 20 July 2020.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Erika Kasiliunaite, the Office of the Government, emails to IRM researcher, 13 July - 20 August 2020.

⁵ Gitana Vaskeliene, Erika Kasiliunaite, Dalia Milkeviciene, the Office of the Government, interview by IRM researcher, 19 August 2020.

⁶ The Amendments to the Law on Law-making, No. XIII-2986, <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/bd9ef2a2a4e811ea51db668f0092944?>

⁷ Dalia Balezente, the Ministry of Justice, interview by IRM researcher, 14 October 2020.

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. Lithuania **did not act** contrary to OGP process.¹

Please see Section 3.2 for an overview of Lithuania'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		

During implementation, the Office of the Government organized one online consultation on the progress of the fourth action plan, which took place from 21 November - 11 December 2019.³ The report of the consultation is available online in the official website, but the open call did not receive any comments from stakeholders.⁴ The Office of the Government also organized an in-person meeting on 5 December 2019 where it updated participating stakeholders from the working group and multi-stakeholder forum on the implementation progress of the action plan. Participating stakeholders at this meeting also had the chance to ask question about the progress at this meeting. Overall, however, stakeholders were given fewer opportunities to provide inputs or feedback on the action plan’s progress during the implementation phase than they had during the co-creation phase. While stakeholders in the working group convened three times in 2020 (on 14 April, 21 May, and 17 September), these meetings focused on the co-creation of the fifth action plan, as opposed to the implementation progress of the fourth plan. There is also no evidence that the government gave feedback on how it handled stakeholder input from the consultations held during the implementation period.

Some implementing ministries engaged with interested stakeholders more often, to discuss the status of commitments or actions to be taken. Generally, the level of engagement with stakeholders varied per commitment and implementing ministry. For example, the Ministry of Finance discussed with non-governmental stakeholders which key financial datasets should be opened under Commitment 3.⁵ The Information Society Development Committee consulted open data experts at Open Code Lithuania for Lithuania's new open data portal (Commitment 1).⁶ In addition, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour asked NGOs to draft the first concept for the NGO Fund (Commitment 2), later confirmed by the government, and actively collaborated with different interest groups.⁷⁸⁹

At the time of writing this report (October 2020), Lithuania's multi-stakeholder forum has 224 members, an increase from 188 in 2019. The vast majority of forum members (172) were women. 77 members come from Vilnius, and the others come from other parts of Lithuania. As before, the forum is open to anyone.¹⁰ However, it does not operate independently of the Office of the Government and mainly serves as a pool of experts or those interested in open government. The Office of the Government did not convene the forum during the implementation of the fourth action plan, but it invited forum members to attend the above-mentioned working group meetings in November-December 2019, as well as an OGP-related international event organized on 21 May 2020.

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 The Summary of Open Government Partnership mid-term consultation, the Office of the Government, <https://www.lrp.lt/lt/ziniasklaidos-centras/naujienos/prezidentas-kovoje-su-covid-19-butini-skaidrus-ir-kokybiski-viesieji-pirkimai/33928>.

⁴ The Office of the Government, a report of the online consultation, <https://epilietis.lrv.lt/lt/konsultacijos/viesoji-konsultacija-del-atviros-vyriausybes-partnerystes-nacionalinio-veiksmu-plano-l-metu-pazangos-ivertinimo>

⁵ Rasa Kavolyte, Ministry of Finance, interview by IRM researcher, 18 September 2017.

⁶ Julius Belickas, the Information Society Development Committee, interview by IRM researcher, 13 October 2020.

⁷ Stakeholders' meeting, 1 August 2017.

⁸ Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Public consultation about the NGO Fund,

<https://epilietis.lrv.lt/uploads/epilietis/documents/files/2019%2004%2002%20NVO%20fondas%20LT.pdf>

⁹ Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Public consultation about the NGO Fund, <https://lrv.lt/lt/naujienos/nvo-popiete-taurageje-ka-lietuvoje-vadiname-nvo-ir-kaip-turetu-atrodyti-nvo-fondas>

¹⁰ The Office of the Government, An application process to become a member of Open Government Network, <https://epilietis.lrv.lt/formos/atviros-vyriausybes-tinklo-nario-anketa>

3.2 Overview of Lithuania'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
<p>1a. Forum established: In March 2018, the Office of the Government launched a multi-stakeholder forum (called the Open Government Network) as an informal network of members who were expected to participate in activities related to the action plan. The forum is open to everyone but does not organize its work independently of the Office of the Government.</p>	Green	Green
<p>1b. Regularity: Forum members do not meet regularly. Instead, they act as a pool of experts, academia, public sector representatives, and CSOs whom the Office of the Government informs about OGP activities and invites to take part in events and consultations.¹</p>	Red	Red
<p>1c. Collaborative mandate development: This standard was assessed in the IRM Design Report.</p>	Red	N/A
<p>1d. Mandate public: Information about the forum's membership and application process is available on the website of the Office of the Government.² However, the forum has no governance structure, as it functions as a pool of interested stakeholders.</p>	Yellow	Yellow
<p>2a. Multi-stakeholder: The forum includes both governmental and non-governmental representatives</p>	Green	Green
<p>2b. Parity: The forum includes an even balance of governmental and non-governmental representatives.³</p>	Green	Green
<p>2c. Transparent selection: There is a fair and transparent process for non-governmental and other sector members to join the forum. Anyone who submits an application becomes a member.⁴</p>	Green	Green
<p>2d. High-level government representation: The forum includes high-level representatives with decision-making authority from government.⁵</p>	Green	Green
<p>3a. Openness: As the forum does not operate as a separate body, there is no possibility for stakeholders outside the forum to submit their input.</p>	Red	Red
<p>3b. Remote participation: Forum members have not requested possibilities for remote participation and the Office of the Government did not proactively create opportunities to discuss the implementation of the fourth action plan.⁶ However, in 2020, the Office of the Government moved all stakeholder consultations online for the co-creation of the next action plan, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>	Yellow	Yellow

3c. Minutes: The Office of the Government proactively communicates and reports back on its decisions after public consultations. The results of the working group sessions are not published online after each meeting, but the Office of the Government sends feedback to attendees via email.	Yellow	Yellow
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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: There is a special webpage within the official government's website where the Office of the Government publishes major updates on the progress of commitments (in the self-assessment report), consultation processes, and lists people responsible for the commitments. ⁷ However, the Office of the Government does not publish regular information on the progress of milestones or reasons for delays.	Yellow	
4b. Communication channels: Lithuania's OGP webpage does not include a feature to allow the public to comment directly on action plan progress updates.	Red	
4c. Engagement with civil society: The Office of the Government and implementing ministries organized one mid-term public consultation in 2019 to discuss the progress of the action plan. ⁸ However, as mentioned in Section 3.1, the implementing ministries themselves engaged and consulted interested civil society stakeholders during implementation. ⁹	Green	
4d. Cooperation with the IRM: The Office of the Government cooperates with the IRM regularly and publishes IRM reports on its official website. However, it has previously not shared the link to the IRM reports with other government institutions and stakeholders. ¹⁰	Yellow	
4e. MSF engagement: The multi-stakeholder forum did not independently monitor and deliberate on the implementation of the action plan.	Red	
4f. MSF engagement with self-assessment report: The Office of the Government published a mid-term and an end-of-term self-assessment report. However, the multi-stakeholder forum does not provide feedback on the content of the report.	Red	
4g. Repository: The Office of the Government has a special OGP-oriented webpage where it publishes a historical record of all action plans, the composition of the working group, self-assessments, IRM reports, and consultation documents. ¹¹ However, there are no minutes of the working group sessions, and no regular updates (at least every six months) on the progress of the commitments.	Yellow	

¹ The Office of the Government, An application process to become a member of Open Government Network, <https://epilietis.lrv.lt/formos/atviros-vyriausybes-tinklo-nario-anketa>

² Ibid.

³ Erika Kasiliunaite, the Office of the Government, email to IRM researcher, 23 October 2020.

⁴ The Office of the Government, An application process to become a member of Open Government Network, <https://epilietis.lrv.lt/formos/atviros-vyriausybes-tinklo-nario-anketa>

⁵ Erika Kasiliunaite, the Office of the Government, email to IRM researcher, 23 October 2020.

⁶ Erika Kasiliunaite, the Office of the Government, email to IRM researcher, 28 October 2020.

⁷ The Office of the Government, Open Government activities, <https://epilietis.lrv.lt/isitrauk-i-atviros-vyriausybes-veiklas>

⁸ The Office of the Government, The Summary of Open Government Partnership mid-term consultation, <https://www.lrp.lt/lt/ziniasklaidos-centras/naujienos/prezidentas-kovoje-su-covid-19-butini-skaidrus-ir-kokybiski-viesieji-pirkimai/33928>.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Erika Kasiliunaite, the Office of the Government, email to IRM researcher, 28 October 2020.

¹¹ The Office of the Government, Open Government activities, <https://epilietis.lrv.lt/isitrauk-i-atviros-vyriausybes-veiklas>

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 Manual¹ and in Lithuania's Design Report 2018-2020.

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:**
 - 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?
 - 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:
 - Access to Information: Will the government disclose more information or improve the quality of the information disclosed to the public?
 - Civic Participation: Will the government create or improve opportunities or capabilities for the public to inform or influence decisions or policies?
 - 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:
 - Identify the social, economic, political, or environmental problem;
 - Establish the status quo at the outset of the action plan; and
 - 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.

¹ “IRM Procedures Manual,” OGP, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/irm-procedures-manual>